

LETTERS
FROM
SCANDINAVIA

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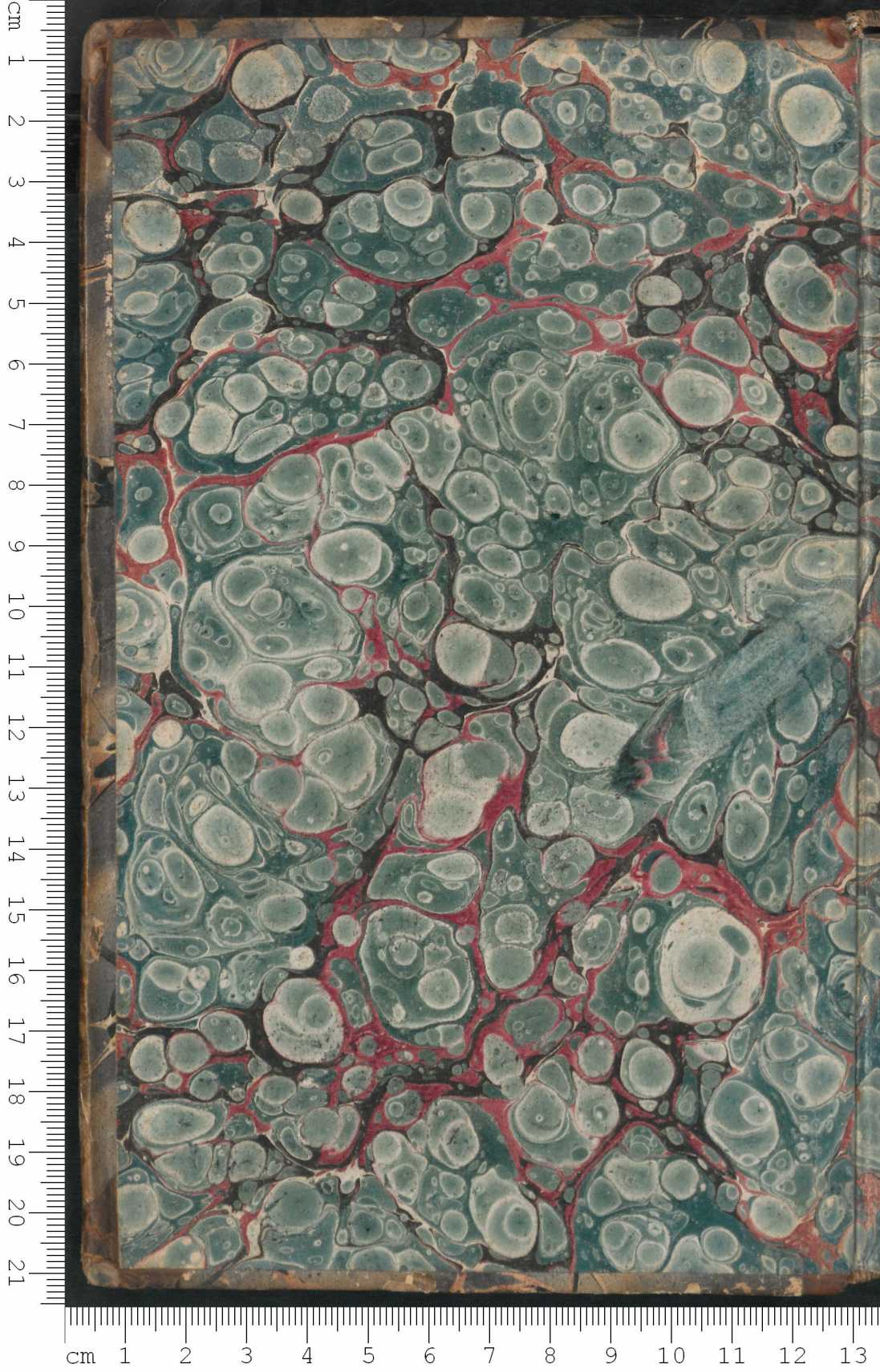
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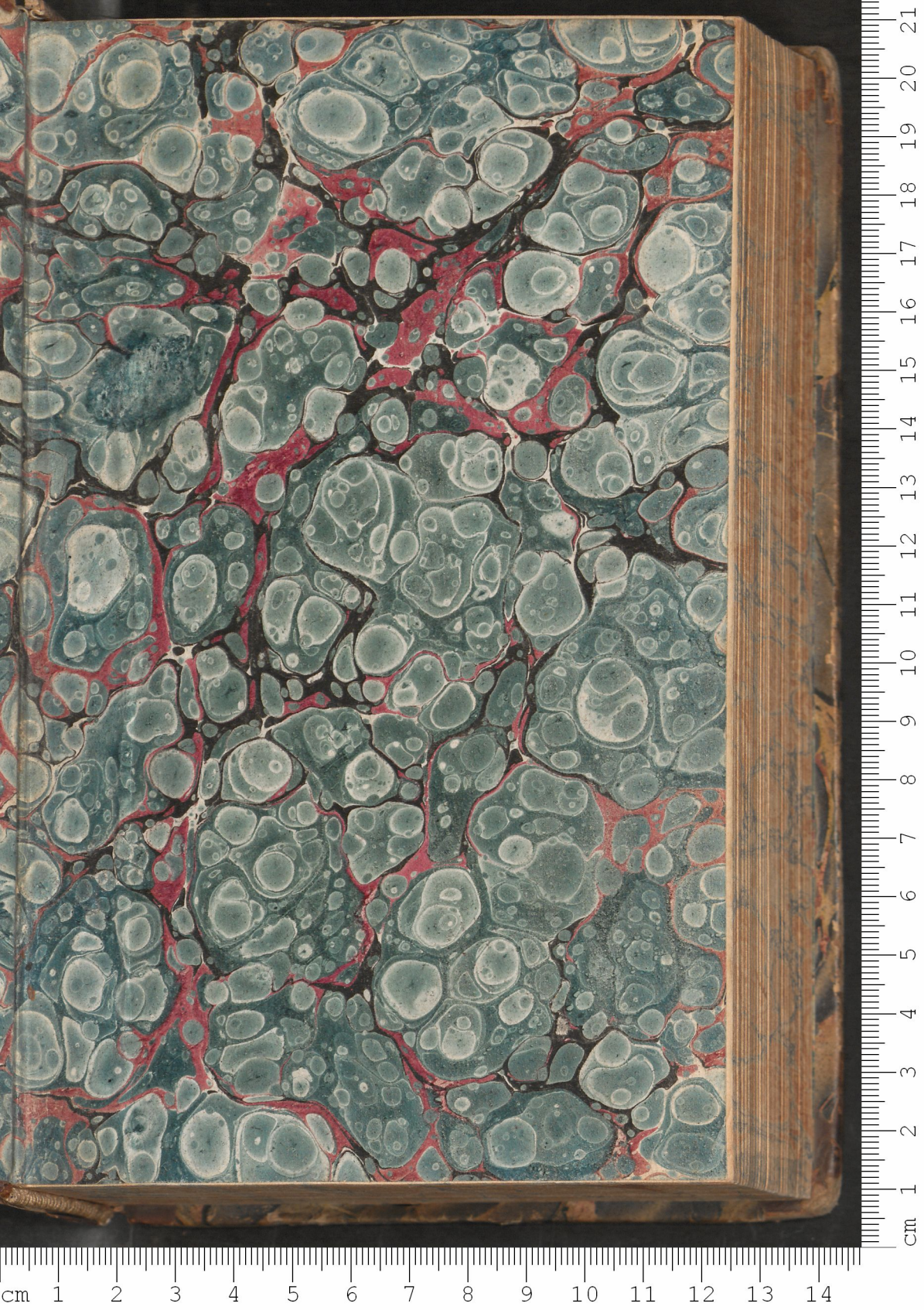
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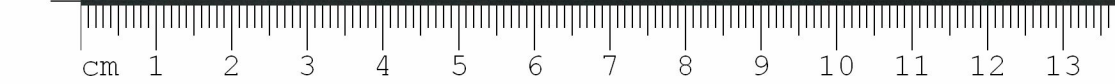
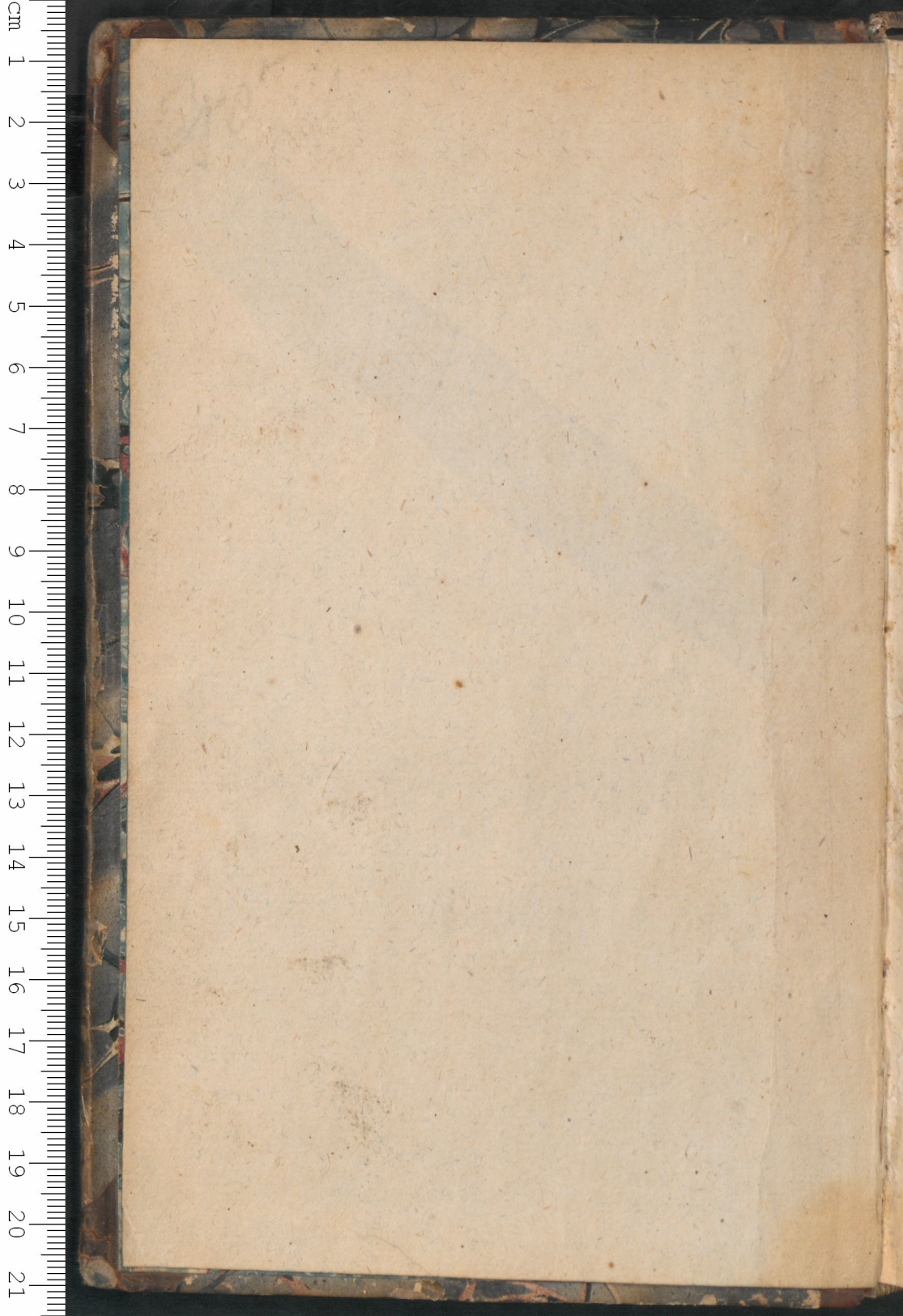




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LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA,

ON THE

PAST AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

NORTHERN NATIONS

OF

EUROPE.

[William Thomson]

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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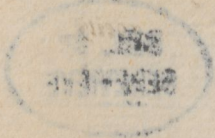


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LETTERS
OF THE
GOVERNMENT
OF THE
EAST AND WEST INDIES
FIRST VOLUME
NORTHERN NATIONS

PETERSBURG, one of the principal towns of
Russia, formerly the residence of the
Emperor, and now the residence of the
Czar. It is situated on the Neva, a
river which flows into the Gulf of
Finland. The city is one of the
most important in Russia, and is
the seat of the government.

LETTER II
Of the common to all parts of the Russian
Government, and of the influence of the
Russians in Persia.



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ERRATA.

Vol. II. page 228—for Feb. 1791 read Feb. 1792.

— page 241—for Feb. 1791 read Feb. 1792.

— page 256—for March 1791 read March 1792.

— page 418, line 1,—for Volhinia read Livonia.

LETTERS

FROM

SCANDINAVIA.

LETTER I.

Petersburg one of the greatest Centres of human Society.—Diversity of Dress, Language, and Manners.—Perfect Toleration in Matters of Religion—but Restraint in those of Government.—The Punishment of the Knout.—The Knout-master.

St. Petersburg.

DEAR SIR,

WERE a philosopher to choose a station from whence to observe human nature in its greatest diversity of character and appearance, he ought to fix upon the capital of Russia. From the *Hotel de Londres* from

VOL. I.

B

whence

whence I now write, he would see a continual succession of people from all quarters of the globe, dressed in the fashion of their country; and with the fanciful ornaments of courtiers, and cavaliers, and heydukes, and running footmen; the venerable beards and flowing vestments of priests, and the cropped heads and leather coats of peasants; forming one of the most amusing and whimsical scenes that can be imagined.

The diversity is as great in the manner of life, as it is in the appearance of those who inhabit this city. Foreigners generally continue attached to their native habits and predilections: and, in St. Petersburg, you may be entertained after the manner of almost every nation in Europe; as well as most of the Asiatic tribes, from the wall of China to the mouth of the Oby, and from Constantinople to the sea of Kamtschatka.

I am much pleased with the freedom which strangers enjoy here—I mean the freedom from being molested on account
of

of the singularity of their manner and appearance. In London you must not only dress in the English style: you must also follow all the capricious varieties of fashion, if you would avoid being marked out as ridiculous, or hooted as a monster. A Russian cap and furtout would excite as much idle wonder in the mob of London, as a speaking fish, or a learned pig. A friend of mine, who had occasion last winter to visit London after a long residence in this country, experienced this to his great mortification. Feeling the English dress rather too thin, one cold morning he ventured to put on a comfortable fur great-coat; and in this equipment to defy the east wind, and the curiosity of the inhabitants of Thames-street. But he soon found that he had miscalculated the effects of this last principle. The surprise which his first appearance excited, was soon succeeded by suspicion, and suspicion by insult. After he had been sufficiently mortified by the coarse jokes and indecent ribaldry of those who gathered round to gaze at him, a doubt

was suggested by some one whether he were really a man, or a monster. A virago, who feared neither man nor monster, stepped up to him in order to determine this point ; and having examined him round and round, while he stood motionless in an agony of terror and vexation, she spit in his face ; and giving him a box on the ear, told him that " a French son of a bitch like him deserved no better." This adventure effectually cured him of all desire to appear again on the streets of London in a Russian great-coat.

In St. Petersburg you are perfectly safe from all such ridiculous disasters : not only do you see people appearing in national dresses of the most various fashions and materials, without drawing on themselves particular regard ; but often also, on a masquerade evening, you observe many walking to the public rooms in their masques and other whimsical accoutrements, without attracting a troublesome degree of attention.

Some of our countrymen, who are so zealously English as to revere even the follies and excesses which spring out of our
free

free constitution, affect to consider this circumstance as an instance of the stupidity of the Russian character, and of the degradation to which the people are reduced by the active operation of a despotic government. It does not appear to me, however, that any such supposition is necessary to account for the fact. The Russian empire is made up of a variety of nations, differing from one another in language, in dress, and in manners. The Court dress being purely foreign, there are no circumstances which give to any one national dress of the empire the superiority over all the rest. Hence every tribe preserves its own: and as the capital naturally attracts to itself some individuals from every nation of which the empire is composed, the inhabitants of St. Petersburg are accustomed to see much greater variety of dresses than those of almost any other city. Habit produces the same effects in Russia that it does in other countries: a Russian can no more than an Englishman be supposed to stand gaping in idle wonder

at objects which he may see every hour of the day.

I happened to be, about the middle of the late war in America, at a town in the south of England, at the time it was announced that a Highland regiment was on its march to be stationed there for the winter. A petticoated regiment had not been seen there in the memory of man, and the prospect of so strange a sight raised the most lively curiosity: all ranks were equally eager in their enquiries about this wonderful battalion, and anxious for the day of its arrival. To have seen the interest that was excited, you would have imagined that an army from the moon, if not from a still more distant planet, was on its march to bless the inhabitants of this fortunate city with sights hitherto unseen by mortal eye. The wished-for day at length arrived; and men, women, and children, myself among the number, turned out to see a regiment of men in short hose and shorter petticoats, with tartan plaids around their shoulders, and

and hairy purses dangling before them. For the space of a week curiosity continued unsated. The parade was crowded with spectators. Whenever a highlander appeared, all eyes were turned on him. In all companies you heard of nothing but the Highland regiment. The gentlemen admired the easy garments and unincumbered motions of the foldiers; and the ladies dreamed of nothing but the singularity of their dress.

But wonders, like other things, come to an end. The novelty soon wore off, and, by the end of the second week, a highlander had nothing more marvellous in his appearance than another man. The case is the same in Russia. New sights excite a curiosity as great, though not so troublesome, in a Russian as in an Englishman. But it is not a proof of stupidity in the Russians, that they are not struck with appearances, which, though they be uncommon with us, are familiar among them.

Strangers enjoy in this empire, as entire a freedom in matters of religion as in dress and manner of life; neither do the natives

discover a greater degree of curiosity to observe the one than the other. The English, the French, the Germans, the Dutch, &c. have churches in St. Petersburg, which are attended by the ladies and domestics of their respective congregations. Sometimes also you may see a few gentlemen in these churches; but this is comparatively a rare occurrence. It is also extremely rare to see natives led by their curiosity to observe the ceremonies of any religion except their own. Indeed, the forms of the Russian national church are so splendid and imposing, that those who have been educated to revere them, must necessarily look with contempt on the nakedness of other religious institutes which have no such pompous appendages to set them off.

The freedom which foreigners enjoy in these respects is, however, counterbalanced by some restraints and mortifications to which they are exposed. An Englishman, for example, thinks it extremely hard that he is not at liberty to speak his sentiments of political measures, or political men and women;

men; nor to travel more than a few posts out of town without a passport; nor to pass a man of rank without making way for him. In these respects, however, he is only on a footing with the natives. Political discussion is almost wholly interdicted: and those who still venture to speak of the measures of government, do it in whispers; and not till they have looked carefully around them, to see whether any suspicious person be within hearing. Yet, notwithstanding the care that is taken to prevent the too free agitation of matters of state, men will sometimes take liberties with forbidden subjects of discourse even in Russia. In these cases a special statute is issued, prohibiting all conversation whatever on that particular point, and denouncing high pains and penalties against all who shall be found transgressing*.

What

* The only ordinance of this kind that has been published since I have been in Russia, was issued on the occasion of the death of Field Marshal Prince Potemkin. This man, who had the good fortune to please his
sovereign,

What effect such a prohibition would have had in England, an Englishman need not be told. But in Russia there are some cogent

sovereign, and had in consequence been raised to the highest rank and authority to which a subject could aspire, was extremely obnoxious to the nation. He died suddenly, and with circumstances which excited suspicion; although, from the common account, his death seems to have proceeded from an apoplectic stroke, to which, from his manner of life, he must have been peculiarly predisposed. The resentment of the nation, which had been repressed by the dread of his power, immediately broke out into the most bitter invectives against his memory. He was accused of sacrificing, with equal facility, the honour of his sovereign and the interests of the empire to the views of his own aggrandisement; of crushing friends and enemies without distinction and without remorse, when they stood in the way of his own preferment; and of privately sending immense sums of the public money out of the empire, for purposes which he durst not avow. His private vices, too, a rich field for censure, were industriously brought to light. It was now universally known

cogent motives to obedience which seldom fail of producing their effect. A great teacher of political submission, called a knout-master general, keeps his residence in this capital;

known that he had been accustomed to carry the indulgences of the table to a gross excess; and that two of his nieces had successively lived with him as his mistresses. Even his courage was called in question: and as it was known that, in his practice, he was a mortal enemy to duelling; this circumstance, which had formerly been ascribed to his moderation, was now accounted a proof of his pusillanimity. Posterity, if it shall think the life of Prince Potemkin worth the recording, may, perhaps, find in him both good and great qualities: but as his contemporaries were not inclined, after his death, to allow him either the one or the other; his sovereign, who respected the memory of a servant she had believed faithful, chose to consign his name to a premature oblivion, and to impose silence when she could not command approbation.

As Prince Potemkin appears again in these Letters as an important actor on the theatre of Russia, it will readily occur to the reader, that this note was written some time after the letter to which it is annexed.

who,

who, though but little conversant with the science of jurisprudence, can, by a *few practical strokes*, make a statute more coercive than could be done by all the reasoning of all the lawyers that ever lived. This august personage, who is generally a man of high rank and higher worship, never condescends to adopt the pedantic accuracy of attending to forms of procedure, to attend to distinctions of cases, or to the tedious investigation of facts and circumstances, which tend so much to retard the legal speed of justice in our native country. Without any other formality than that of announcing an order from his superiors, he proceeds directly to the exercise of his occupation, and generally applies his admonition so vigorously, that he who has received one lesson seldom cares to be found standing in need of a second.

You may perhaps think that any thing like levity is very much misplaced on such a subject. Englishmen are accustomed to speak of the knout as of the most dreadful and most degrading punishment that can be conceived. Yet it is neither more cruel nor
more

more degrading than some punishments that are inflicted in our own country. Consider the public whippings which are, in a multitude of cases, awarded by our own law; or the still more dreadful floggings, &c. which our military delinquents are obliged to undergo; and you will see that one of the freest and most enlightened nations that ever existed, has not yet been able to devise any probable expedient to mitigate, beyond a certain degree, the severity of legal infliction. I would not be understood to insinuate any unqualified approbation of either the one practice or the other. I only wish to assure you, that the dreadful descriptions we have read of the punishment of the knout are considerably overcharged; at least, that they are not applicable to the present practice; although they may have been suggested by some of the most atrocious instances of former times. Travellers have either been misled by their own feelings on this subject, or they have voluntarily misled their readers. Were I to translate the word *knout* by its precise equi-

equivalent *whip*, and tell you that, in Russia, persons convicted of certain crimes are punished by whipping, I should tell you the exact truth: and yet it would not strike you as in the least degree extraordinary; because you may see the same species of discipline inflicted on the same description of offenders in every town in Great Britain. But when I retain the Russian word, and say, that in this unhappy country malefactors are knouted; imagination supplies the place of exact description, and your blood begins to freeze, from a confused notion you form, of flaying alive, and tearing out the tongue, and otherwise mangling the carcase of such miserable wretches as are condemned to this inhuman punishment. Trust me, there is more deception in this than you may be apt to imagine. The knout, as it is commonly inflicted, is not more severe than the whippings in many cases ordered by an English judge. It is not by any means so terrible as the floggings sometimes inflicted on our military offenders. A Russian, after having just received the ordinary

ry number of strokes of the knout, which seldom exceeds twelve or fifteen, has been heard to say, that for a bottle of brandy he would undergo as many more. You may indeed insinuate, that this must have been owing to his attachment to brandy, rather than to the mildness of the punishment. But I imagine the greatest drunkard in the English army, when suffering the excruciating effect of five hundred lashes, would not consent to take another five hundred for all the distilled spirits in Britain. But, although in point of "corporal sufferance" a flogging in Russia be not more severe than one in England, I acknowledge that I cannot think of the office of knout-master general without abhorrence; because, from the manner in which the suspicious policy of favourites and ministers causes it to be exercised, it is a vile instrument of oppression, employed to execute the atrocious purposes of private revenge, as often as to punish the guilt of real delinquents. Not only may masters order their slaves to be knouted by the public executioner, without assigning
any

any reason but their own pleasure; but a mandate is sometimes issued, under the authority of government, ordering the *knout-meister general* to inflict the same punishment on persons of rank and fashion who have had the misfortune to fall under suspicion; that is, who have given offence to some of those poisonous insects, which, under the names of courtiers and favourites, are continually buzzing about the ears of majesty. In these cases the knout-meister, attended by some of his gang, goes privately to the house of the devoted person, and, whatever be the rank or sex or age of his victim, executes his orders with un pitying rigour.

I have been told (for I never had an opportunity of seeing it) that when this officer is ordered to Moscow, which sometimes happens, as most of the disaffected or disappointed nobles have their winter residence there, his appearance operates like the breaking out of the plague. The public places are shut up; social intercourse is almost wholly suspended, and the city waiting in fearful expectation where the blow is to fall;
for

for it is well known that the knout-meister never makes such journeys in vain. Censure is totally inadequate to such a villainous police. Read the account of it, and, with me, thank Heaven that you were born an Englishman!

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Atrocities common in all Periods of the Russian Government.—Voluntary Submission of the Russians to Despotism.--Instances of the Ferocity of Peter.--Action and Re-action between Tyranny in a Government and Degradation in a People.—Difficulty of political Reform, and Danger of political Innovation.—Ignorance and Obstinacy of the Russians—overcome in a great Measure by the persevering Energy and Wisdom of Government.—Magnanimity and other Virtues as well as Talents of Catherine II.

St. Petersburg.

DEAR SIR,

YOU express your astonishment how any nation can submit to a government which authorises such enormities as the private castigations mentioned in my letter. Had you attended to the internal history of this empire, your surprise would have ceased.

The

The annals of the princes of this country, with only a few exceptions, are stained with deeds of uncommon atrocity. The gibbet, the axe, and the knout, were the great instruments of their administration; and hence the people, seeing the rod of tyranny continually waving over their heads, became by degrees callous to its impression. From the practice of submitting to the will of their princes arose habits of subjection in the people, which have rendered them the willing victims of arbitrary power, and riveted the fetters of despotism.

At what period, or from what circumstances, this tendency was first impressed on the national spirit is perhaps impossible to be known. The causes which give to nations their distinctive character, seem to me to lie generally without the reach of our observation. I imagine that government, which is generally supposed to be the great agent in this case, is as much the consequence as it is the cause of national character. At one period, the form of government over the greater part of Europe was

C 2

nearly

nearly the same. The characters of the different European nations were, however, at that period, as distinct as they are now. The three nations of which the British empire consists have long enjoyed similar privileges; yet the English character is very different from the Irish, and the Scotch is distinct from both.

It would seem, therefore, that the origin of those characteristic peculiarities which distinguish nations is very remote, and that it is vain to search for its causes. But, when the tendency of national manners and opinions is once formed, it is easy for government to assist its progress, to complete its effect, and prolong its duration. According to this view, the forms of government, which have been sanctified in Russia by immemorial prescription, appear fully adequate to account for the abject submission which distinguishes the subjects of this empire. Without recurring to the barbarity of more antient times, I shall beg leave to turn your attention to Peter the Great, justly in many respects styled the father of
his

his country. I need not remind you of the atrocious punishments inflicted in his name, and by his authority. You cannot be ignorant of them, and I wish not to revive in you the sentiments of horror and indignation which you must have felt in perusing the accounts of them. Peter, indeed, seldom had recourse to the private mode of punishment which I mentioned in my last, but he often punished with his own hands such delinquents as he did not wish to deliver up to the public executioner. The instances of this kind that are on record are almost innumerable. I select a single example. He had summoned a meeting of his council, I have forgot on what occasion, at seven in the morning. When he entered the senate-house, he was astonished to find not one of those arrived whom he had ordered to attend. By the time he had waited about ten minutes, and wrought himself up to a proper degree of rage, the president appears; who, seeing the storm that was about to fall on him, begins to make an apology. But in vain. Peter, whose passions

C 3

never

never listened to excuses, instantly seizes and belabours him most severely. Every member shared the same fate according to the order of his arrival, until General Gordon appeared. The general was not a little alarmed at the appearance which the council-room presented. But the Emperor's rage was by this time pretty well exhausted, and he only told Gordon, that, as he had not been punctual to his time, he was very lucky in being *so far* behind it. "For," added he, "I am already sufficiently fatigued with beating these scoundrels; and I understand that a Scotch constitution does not agree well with a drubbing."

The private infliction of the knout seems to be the legitimate offspring of this ready discipline. The Russian sceptre has, you know, been held, since the days of Peter the Great, only by women, except during the short reign of Peter the Second, and the few months which Peter the Third survived his aunt. Although some of the Princesses who have succeeded to the throne of Peter the Great have shewn themselves qualified to

to sway his sceptre, none of them have been able to wield his cudgel. Hence this duty has devolved on the knout-meister general.

How far the nation has lost or gained by the change, I shall not pretend to guess. But it seems to be owing to the respectable origin of this mode of castigation that there is less of disgrace connected with it than could easily be imagined. It is well known that chastisements which Peter the Great inflicted with his own hand were never supposed to disgrace those who suffered them. When a courtier was soundly drubbed, or pulled by the nose, or had a tooth torn out by the Emperor, at all which exercises Peter was remarkably dextrous, he suffered only the bodily pain of the operation. His honour was not in the least affected. And as it seldom happened that his master put less confidence in him after such an accident than he had done before it, his credit suffered as little as his honour. Menzikoff used to appear in all his native haughtiness and presumption, even when his countenance

nance bore the most unequivocal marks of his master's resentment. In like manner the private infliction of the knout is hardly supposed to disgrace a Russian gentleman more than flagellation does an English schoolboy.

On these accounts this species of discipline is less atrocious, and excites less abhorrence, than you seem to imagine. When an instance of it occurs, those who hear of it thank their good fortune that they were not the victims, and continue to treat the sufferer with the same consideration as before. I must also add, that the instances of it which now occur are VERY RARE.

Yet with all the alleviations I can suggest (and I am willing to suggest all that truth will allow), you will say, that the government must be abominable which authorizes such enormities. I shall not dispute this point with you; for I think little can be urged in favour of that system of legislation which is held together only by the fear of corporal infliction, which must degrade
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before it can govern, and make of the human species bad men, in order to render them good subjects.

But, although I cannot survey without abhorrence the system of despotism that prevails in this empire, I think there are insuperable difficulties in the way of speedily introducing any considerable improvement. The corruption of the people seems to keep pace in every nation with the vices of the government. Perhaps tyranny in the government and degradation in the people act mutually in producing one another; just as, in certain diseases, the derangement of the body induces mental debility, and the debility thus induced increases the bodily disorder from which it arose. Whatever there may be in this supposition, the spirit of the Russian government and the manners of the Russians are well adapted to one another. A free government would hardly be relished by the nation in its present state, and a more enlightened nation would not tamely submit to such a government.

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I have often, indeed, heard bold theorists propose to annihilate at once whatever is vicious in the government of this empire, and to create a free constitution in its stead. A surgeon might as well cut off a limb in order to remove the pain of a corn on the toe. The cure might, to be sure, be in both cases accomplished; but I acknowledge, I should not choose to trust either my person to such radical practice, or my political quiet to such active theory. Such men seem to consider the science of legislation as analogous to a mechanical art, in which, from previously calculating the power of every constituent part, you can deduce with mathematical certainty the general effect of the whole. But legislators have not like mechanics inert matter to act upon, which they can mould into whatever shape they please. They have for the object of their science, beings refractory to the hand of the manager—unreasonable in their prejudices, in their predilections and antipathies, and who retain the original impression and bent of their character with an obstinacy

obstinacy proportioned to the force that is applied to change them. It is impossible to calculate the effect that may be produced by an attempt to introduce a great and sudden change into the situation of a nation of such beings; because it is impossible to foresee the various accidents that may and must occur to accelerate or retard or change the motion you have communicated to the national spirit.

In attempting to change the institutions and manners and spirit of a nation—at least of such a nation as Russia—the only way you can proceed with safety, or with a certainty of accomplishing your end, is to proceed with extreme caution; to advance toward your object slowly; and to undermine gradually the prejudices and habits which length of time has consecrated in the minds of the people. The nation must be made to wish for a reformation before they will accept of one. Every one knows the reluctance with which the plans of Peter the Great for the civilization and improvement of the people were received by the nation.

nation. Had Peter's genius been less sublime and imposing, or had his people been more closely united by a free communication, and a knowledge of the national temper, this great legislator might have been known to the historian only as filling up a blank in the barren annals of despotism, or at best as a prince who perished in the rash though generous attempt to overcome nature, and impress the polish of civilization on the barbarous manners of a savage people. The attempt which the Empress Elizabeth made to introduce a more regular administration of justice, and a better system of jurisprudence, was not more favourably received. Clamorous complaints were set up in all quarters by those interested in the continuation of old abuses; and eagerly re-echoed by those who were the dupes of a blind attachment to ancient usages, and who had neither common sense to see the tendency of the proposed laws, nor spirit to feel the oppressive nature of those that were to be abrogated. "If they will not consent to receive good laws," said Elizabeth,

beth, "they must be allowed to feel the weight of their bad ones;" and the attempt was laid aside.

When I have stated such facts as these in conversation, and still heard the trumpet of reformation sounded by the advocates for great and immediate alteration; it has always brought to my mind the fanciful experiment which divines have imagined—of supposing a bad man to have gained admission into heaven, and there depicting the uncouth appearance he would make amongst beings for whose society he is not prepared. I imagine that Russia would make just such an awkward figure among nations, were its present government made as perfect as a republican could wish it. What has sometimes happened with regard to individuals, might, in this case, be found verified of the nation. I have known a Russian foldier, who has solicited a discharge with much anxiety and perseverance, return to his old commander a few months after he had obtained his long wished-for liberty, and beg to be

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again taken into the service; because he did not know how to live as his own master. I think the nation would be as incapable of shaking off at once its old prejudices, as this soldier was; and as unfit for relishing the blessings of freedom. Too many are interested, or fancy themselves interested, in the continuation of the existing abuses, to allow them to be remedied without opposition. The reclamation of such men, coinciding with vulgar notions, would unavoidably excite general discontent. The nation is not sufficiently enlightened to judge of the motives from which alterations in the form of government are introduced, or of those from which they would be opposed.

In such a dispute, the party whose arguments were addressed to the national prejudices would be sure to have the advantage over his antagonist.

But though it be very unlikely that Russia is to obtain a distinguished rank among nations, either for the mildness of its government or the civilization of its inhabitants;

habitants; the nation is certainly in a progressive state of improvement, in both respects. For the honour of royalty I must add, that the progress is entirely owing to the exertions of the sovereign power. If we were to compare in this respect the sovereigns of Russia, from the accession of Peter the First to the present time, with the princes of any other country in Europe for an equal length of time, and at a period when the nation was equally unenlightened with the Russians; Peter and his successors would, I am persuaded, gain much by the comparison. Even in England, national improvements have seldom had their origin in the sovereign power. The spirit of the people has generally led the way; and the court has only had the merit of following. In many cases it has been reluctantly dragged along, and forced to sanction improvements which it could no longer retard.

But in Russia this progress has been completely reversed. At the accession of Peter the First to the throne, the nation was sunk
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into the grossest ignorance and barbarity. Peter and his successors have had not only to set the example of civilization, but also to compel their subjects to follow it. The nation, fancying itself, according to the absurd pride of barbarism, the first people on earth in regard to every useful accomplishment, has not admitted, without the utmost reluctance, the improvements that have been enforced by the sovereign power. The foreigners who have been employed to instruct the people, have met with every discouragement from the nation, that ignorance and pride and prejudice could throw in their way. And the natives have generally succeeded in making the situation of these men sufficiently irksome. Of the English officers who have entered into this service, I have not found an individual who has not had cause to regret that ever he had flattered himself with the dreams of greatness in Russia. Admiral Sir Samuel Greig should have been an exception. His integrity was above suspicion. His abilities in his profession were not disputed; and he possessed the
friendship

friendship of many of the principal men of the empire. Yet was his situation rendered extremely disagreeable, from the national jealousy of foreigners, and the fretful opposition of men who would not be instructed, because they were not convinced that they needed to learn. "I am sorry you have so many enemies," said the Empress to him on one occasion, "but I know the reason of it; and you may depend on my protection."

The colonists, whom the present empress invited to cultivate the waste lands belonging to the crown, and instruct the natives in the different operations of husbandry, met with a still worse reception. The imperial orders in their favour were, it is true, fulfilled according to the letter of the statute. Each family received horses and cows, and instruments of husbandry, and provisions, according to the terms of the agreement. But the horses and cows were either old and useless, or else so wild and untractable, that a great part of them made their escape into the woods. The utensils were the worst and the cheapest

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that

that could be procured ; and the provisions were for the most part so much damaged as to be unfit for use. The unhappy colonists were reduced, by these iniquitous and inhuman arts, to extreme misery. Many of them died of hunger ; and not a few, finding their situation insupportable and hopeless, put an end to their own lives. In the mean time the principal authors of these abuses, Mr. Betskoi and Mr. Rutsky, were continually boasting of their services, and presenting accounts of excellent horses, and cows, and carts, and provisions which they were furnishing ; and complimenting their sovereign on the happy consequences which must follow from her benevolent plans for the improvement of the country, and receiving great sums from the treasury for the behoof of the colonists, besides crosses and ribbands and gratuities for their own services. The insignificance of these men might have classed them with the multitude of knaves whose names are forgotten when their vices have ceased to be troublesome, did not the nature of their crimes drag them from the oblivion
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to which they seemed destined, and hold them up to more than common detestation.

Almost every plan that has been adopted for the improvement of the country has met with a similar opposition. The artists who were a few years ago invited over from Britain to put the iron works on a better footing, found themselves harassed with so many impositions, and subjected to so many mortifications, that almost all of them have already resigned their places. At Petrazavodsky, where they were chiefly stationed, only two have remained. In all probability, their forbearance will soon also be exhausted.

It has seldom happened that the sovereigns of Russia have found servants sufficiently enlightened to see the utility of their plans of improvement, and at the same time sufficiently honest to co-operate, with good faith, in carrying them into effect. The men who have been employed for this purpose have either failed in their duty from national prejudice, because they did not wish the objects entrusted to their care to succeed, or they have employed the confidence reposed

in them, dishonestly, to satisfy their own avarice. Catharine the Second has found many a Betskoi and Rutsky to make her plans of improvement fail of the effect they should have produced.

Yet, with all these obstructions, Russia has certainly made very considerable progress in improvement since the æra of Peter the Great. Manufactures of almost every kind have been brought to much greater perfection, and are carried on upon a much more extensive scale. Most of the useful as well as many ornamental arts have made great advances. Commerce has been greatly extended. Even learning has made some progress. It is now no uncommon thing to meet with slaves who can both read and write; whereas, in the days of Peter the Great, so uncommon were these accomplishments, that even Prince Menzikoff, Peter's great favourite, and who afterwards ruled the empire under the nominal reign of Catharine the First, was all his life-time unacquainted with both. The presses of Petersburg and Moscow have furnished the nation with a considerable
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variety of books in the Russian language. Most of them are indeed only translations from other authors, chiefly English and French, but Russia also furnishes some original writers.

These circumstances, while they ardently mark the progressive improvement of the nation, lead us to conclude that the prejudices which have so long counteracted the attempts of the sovereigns of Russia to raise their subjects out of their ancient state of barbarism and degradation, will gradually disappear. The Russians will acquire juster notions of the national interest; they will become sensible of their own deficiencies; they will deserve a better system of government by feeling that they stand in need of it.

I am confirmed in these anticipations, when I consider that the Russian government has become much milder in its execution than it was in former times. The administration of Elizabeth was considerably more lenient than that of Peter the Great; of Menzikoff, under Catharine the First; or

of Biron, under the Empress Anne. Elizabeth was not naturally cruel. She even affected the praise of clemency. Yet at the accession of Peter the Third to the throne, seventeen thousand persons are said to have been restored, from banishment or imprisonment, to their liberty. Many of these had been guilty of no other crime than that of being the relations or dependants of those persons of distinction who had been sacrificed to court intrigues. For, even in the reign of Elizabeth, it continued to be too much the practice, to involve in the ruin of any great man who had become obnoxious to the court, every person who was supposed to be particularly attached to his fortunes.

During the reign of the present empress this absurd species of tyranny has never been admitted. In general the administration of Catharine the Second has been milder than that of her immediate predecessor. It has exhibited very few striking instances of severity. Those miserable beings with whom the mines of Siberia are still amply supplied, consist almost entirely of the refuse of the people,

people, who have been condemned by the ordinary course of law, and whose fate court intrigues could not have influenced. That species of offenders whom the jealousy of former sovereigns would have punished with the utmost rigour, I mean those who were suspected to be disaffected to the interest of the ruling party at court, have not generally met with a severer punishment than that of being *permitted* to travel into foreign countries, during a certain term of years, for their improvement. Elizabeth, to gratify the spleen of her favourites for the time, banished to Siberia, Lestoc, whose talents and activity had been the principal means of raising her to the throne, and that after she had given him the strongest assurances, confirmed by a solemn oath, that she would never listen to the insinuation of his enemies against him. Catharine the Second, after her elevation to the throne, allowed the Countess Elizabeth Vorontzoff to live unmolested, although this woman had been the favourite mistress of Peter the Third, on whose account he had formed those resolutions against

his wife which brought on the revolution in 1762.

With equal magnanimity, and in equal opposition to the maxims of Russian revolutions, she continued Count Munich in all his offices and appointments, although he had been the most zealous of Peter's adherents, and had been prevented only by his master's pusillanimity from precipitating her from the throne to which she was raised.

The same spirit of moderation has distinguished the course of her reign. Under former sovereigns, the dismissal of a favourite or minister from his office was generally the prelude to sending him to Siberia. The present Empress has seldom changed her servants; and those of them who have been dismissed, have been allowed to retire honourably, and live in peace. Although her plan of forming a new code of laws has not been carried into effect, she has established many particular statutes, and adopted many regulations favourable to an equal distribution of justice. In the emancipation of the peasants on the crown lands, she has set an example

example which, it is to be hoped, many of the Russian gentlemen will soon follow. A few of them have already been in part her imitators in this respect; and as the good effects of this liberal policy become apparent, it is not to be doubted but that it will be more generally adopted.

During the present reign the public has been totally unaccustomed to such shocking examples of barbarity as were often presented to them in former times. The natural consequence of this circumstance, taken in connection with the increased diffusion of knowledge, has been, that the national spirit has acquired a certain degree of independence which it did not before possess. Absolute submission to the will of their superiors, though still a very prevalent principle, is not now the ruling principle which actuates the subjects of this empire. Were Peter the Great to rise from the tomb, and seize his former sceptre, his courtiers and officers would not submit to be publicly beaten by him without resistance; nor durst he attempt to exercise on the most despicable set of men
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in the empire those atrocities with which he formerly extinguished the Strelgi.

Although therefore much remains to be done, in order that the government of this country may be established on liberal and equal principles, yet considerable approaches have been made to this object. The administration of Catharine is as different from that of some of her predecessors, as it is from that of our own government under George the Third.

I am sensible that, in attempting to bestow praise on the Empress of Russia, I have to encounter opinions which have long been established in your mind. Like most of our countrymen, you have formed your idea of her character from a few detached facts; which, as generally happens to such reports, have been embellished in proportion to the distance from which they have come, with many imaginary circumstances fashioned to the theories of those who have imported and rehearsed them. I am sure however you will do me the justice to believe that I would not willingly mislead you, especially on a
subject

subject where I can have no interest in misrepresentation. I had when I came into this country similar impressions of this august personage with you; and, when I first heard her virtues extolled, an emotion of disgust involuntarily mixed itself with my incredulity. But a longer residence has convinced me, that it is not without reason the natives consider the revolution to be one of the most fortunate events that ever happened to the empire. Without entering into the discussion of the particular facts, on which the prejudice against the Empress of Russia is founded, I only beg leave to submit it to yourself, whether the sovereign can be supposed to possess small merit, who, coming by a very equivocal title to the throne of a nation accustomed to faction and revolution, has been able during a long reign of upwards of thirty years to unite in her favour the general voice of the people.

L E T.

LETTER III.

Slowness of progressive Improvement.—The Circumstances that promoted various Improvements in England—contrasted with many untoward Circumstances in the Condition of the Russians.—The Empress Anne, and Administration of Count Biron.—The Empress Elizabeth.—The Fall of Peter III.—Extremes of Knowledge and Ignorance in Russia, and of Rudeness and Barbarism.—Errors of former Sovereigns of Russia, in their Mode of endeavouring to diffuse Knowledge throughout the Empire.

St. Petersburg.

DEAR SIR,

IN my last I gave it as my opinion, that Russia is in a progress of improvement in regard to both the administration of its government and the character of the people. If, however, you take what you are accustomed

tomed to see in Britain as the standard with which you compare the state of this country; and imagine that, in Russia, arts and sciences and civilization have made a remarkable progress, you will mistake very widely: Russia will in no respect bear a comparison with England. Indeed it is impossible it should: the progress of national improvement is necessarily slow. Within the ordinary limits of human life we can seldom mark more than a few advances on some particular subjects; and we must take periods considerably more distant, if we would find the general and remarkable difference between the points at which we make the comparison.

This remark is well illustrated by the history of our own country. England was one of the first nations on which the light of civilization dawned, when it began to pierce through the mists of ignorance and barbarity which hung over the dark ages. A variety of circumstances enabled our fathers to make the most of this advantage. An extensive intercourse with foreigners
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made them acquainted with the improvements of other nations. The mild nature of the constitution led them to form liberal notions of government; to know their own privileges, and feel their own importance. In the long struggle between liberty and arbitrary power, the energy of the national character had full scope. The activity formed by these, extended itself in all directions. When precise limits were fixed to the different parts of the constitution; when men were no longer perplexed with the loquacious subtilty of scholastic divines, and the no less puzzling arguments of metaphysical politicians; liberty, now firmly established, gave to every individual a sense of independence, equally friendly to virtue and to enterprize. The proper mode of philosophizing had already been pointed out; and the different paths of science were explored with ardour and with success. Knowledge descended to the meanest of the people: philosophy lent her aid to the arts of life: commerce and manufactures were prosecuted with industry: wealth was multiplied,

tiplied, and elegance and luxury kept pace with increasing riches. The various departments of society affording scope for the exercise of every talent, and being open to every man who had spirit and ability to make his way into them, were generally filled by those who were best qualified to occupy them with advantage. Thus, while every man contributed to the public stock, his talents, or skill, or industry, in that way in which they could be most advantageously employed, it happened by necessary consequence that the nation advanced to an high degree of improvement.

The case has been very different in Russia: hardly more than a single century has elapsed since this country began to emerge from the grossest barbarity. In that short period much has been done: the sublime genius of Peter the Great formed many plans of improvement, established many manufactures, created many institutions of public utility; and, by directing with a mighty hand the whole power of the State to the great objects he had in view, forced the

the nation to awake from the heavy slumber in which it was sunk. But the national exertions were involuntary: they were the convulsive struggles of a lethargic body forcibly roused into action, rather than the steady efforts of an healthful state directed by the will and performed with alacrity. No sooner was the impelling force of government weakened, than the national effort relaxed: had that been removed, the progress would have been suspended—perhaps it might have returned in a contrary direction. During the period which elapsed between the death of Peter and the accession of Elizabeth, the nation made but little progress. Menzikoff, who directed the public councils during the reign of Catharine the First, continued to prosecute the plans of his former master, but with infinitely less discernment, less steadiness, more caprice, and greater cruelty. Peter the Second was a minor; and the intrigues of the different parties, who strove to acquire or to retain the direction of their young sovereign, left little time during his short reign to think

think of public improvements. Biron, whom the Empress Anne trusted, came to the head of affairs with a total ignorance of the country : and although he possessed a vigorous mind, with considerable industry and talents for business, he had neither the address to gain the respect of those he commanded, nor the genius to form those enlarged views of national interest, those extensive arrangements and combinations which ensure success by comprehending all the accidents which might occasion disappointments. For the honour of Russia, I pass over the Emperor Iwan in silence.

Under Elizabeth the national progress was renewed : this Princess possessed a considerable portion of the genius of her father, adorned with an elegance of manners and a correctness of taste, which were very uncommon in the nation she governed. She promoted the improvement of her empire by means much more gentle than those which had formerly been employed, by striving to make her subjects comprehend the beneficial tendency of her institutions,

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rather

rather than by compelling them to adopt manners, and prosecute plans which they detested, because they saw no benefit to be reaped from them. The fall of Peter the Third, was in a great measure owing to the precipitant ardour with which he attempted to introduce alterations, which the nation was not prepared to adopt.

Of the present Empress I have already given you my opinion: she has uniformly followed out the ideas of improvement which the genius of Peter the Great had conceived; and imitated his example, in every thing, but the severity of his government and the rudeness of his manners. To a most comprehensive mind enlightened by study and reflection, she adds uncommon steadiness and application; and, as she disdains not to descend to the most minute detail of affairs, she has done more for the good of the empire than all the sovereigns who have intervened from the death of Peter the First to her own accession.

From this slight sketch you perceive that arts and sciences and civilization have been
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forced forward in Russia beyond their natural progress. Hence it has happened, that, while a few individuals, forming themselves on the excellent models which have been brought within their view, have attained to a considerable degree of eminence; the great body of the people is still, compared with civilized nations, in a very rude state. Indeed, it is impossible to conceive that, in the short period which has elapsed since civilization began to dawn on the Russian empire, knowledge and refinement should have become naturalized to the soil.

The picture of Russia is therefore very different from that of England: it is different from that which any other European nation has exhibited at any period of its history. Where improvement has advanced in its natural order, without being hurried on by a premature culture, knowledge has descended from the learned to the whole body of the people. The vulgar have gradually become less prone to superstition, less unreasonable in their prejudices, less rude in their manners: in a word, the improvement

provement in the mass of the people has borne some proportion to the progress of science among the studious. But in Russia this diffusion of knowledge and refinement has not taken place. Those who have undertaken to describe the situation of this country have often remarked, that the extremes of magnificence and beggary are generally very near neighbours: the extremes of knowledge and ignorance, of civilization and barbarity, are not less nearly allied. While the few who have turned their attention to literary pursuits, are on a footing with literary men in other nations, the multitude continue to cherish most of the ridiculous prejudices and legendary superstitions which degrade the dark ages. While the men of rank and fashion rival the same class of men in the most civilized nations in Europe, the mass of the people still continue to be very much attached to the barbarous usages of their forefathers. In the capital, in many of the principal towns, and in the immediate neighbourhood of extensive manufactories, this inequality is less striking,

striking, because, in these, men have better models continually before their eyes. But in the interior parts of the country you find very few who are advanced beyond the state in which Peter the Great found them.

The causes of this appearance are sufficiently obvious; besides that knowledge has not been long enough introduced to have spread through the different classes of society, and dissipated the prejudices which long-continued ignorance had sanctified in the minds of the people, the manner of its introduction has been unfavourable to its speedy diffusion. The great legislator of Russia directed his attention chiefly to the higher order of his subjects. The schools which he instituted were well enough calculated for those who had money and leisure to attend them: but those who possessed neither the one nor the other, could reap no benefit from them. He invited, it is true, into his dominions, foreigners of learning and eminence to instruct his subjects: but foreigners of learning and eminence could not be supposed to descend from the heights

of science to teach the alphabet ; and this was the point at which the institution should have begun, if it was intended to be generally useful. It is difficult to conceive what general benefit could be expected from a few teachers of the higher branches of science, when the nation they were to instruct was not tinctured with even the rudiments of knowledge.

The successors of Peter the Great, who have laboured to instruct their subjects, have generally fallen into the same error. Half the sums which have been lavished on such institutions as the Academy of Arts and Sciences, if judiciously applied to encourage a great number of teachers of the elementary parts of knowledge, would have tended more to civilize the empire, than all the labours of all the learned who have ever appeared in Russia. I have somewhere seen it observed, not inaptly, that the only benefit Russia has reaped from the Academy of St. Petersburg, was that of having acquired a calendar in the Russian language, calculated for the meridian of the capital,

capital. This is no doubt expressing the matter both too strongly and ludicrously, though it is certainly true, that Russia has derived more splendour than benefit from her academies. It is, indeed, generally the fate of such institutions as have for their object the good of the multitude, that their utility is almost their only recommendation. He who establishes a parish school, at which an industrious teacher is maintained, to instruct those young persons who before had not the means of knowledge within their reach, does more than the man, who, by founding a professorship, affords the means of luxury and sloth to one of those useless beings who take refuge from the duties of life in the indolence of universities. Yet the endower of a parish school reaps no other advantage from his benevolence but the consciousness of having done good ; while the founder of a professorship is celebrated for his munificence ; has his name inscribed on the walls of colleges, and his praises rehearsed in periodical lectures and biographical dictionaries.

Had the sovereigns of Russia directed their chief attention to civilize and instruct the mass of the people, they would not, it is probable, have seen the learned vie with one another in praising them as the patrons of letters (for the learned, like other men, are generally loudest in their encomiums of those who are most liberal to themselves); but they would have had the satisfaction of being useful to their country. The world would not have seen science enriched with the many excellent publications which have proceeded from the Academy of St. Petersburg: but it would have seen a spectacle infinitely more interesting—not a few individuals only, but a nation enlightened by the efforts of the government—the mind which had long been cramped with the fetters of despotism and superstition opening to receive more rational impressions—the ridiculous prejudices and rude usages of a mighty empire giving place to liberal sentiments and polished manners.

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LETTER IV.

Wise Attention of the present Empress Catharine II. to the Improvement of the lower Orders of her Subjects.—Circumstances that retard and obstruct the Progress of Improvement in Russia.—Slavery of the Peasants.—Misapplication of Study exemplified in the Pursuits of a Russian Bishop.—Situation and Character of the Russian Clergy.

Peterburg.

I **THOUGHT** to except the present Empress from any share in the censure which I think due to the sovereigns of Russia, for having neglected the mass of the people, in their endeavours to civilize their empire. She has bestowed her chief attention on the lower orders of her subjects. The instruction of the higher classes had already been sufficiently provided for. But it remained

maintained for her to procure the means of improvement for those who had neither money nor leisure to attend the seminaries which had formerly been instituted. Accordingly she has established a number of schools, in various parts of her dominions, at which the children of the lower classes are instructed in the elementary parts of knowledge suited to their station.

Many circumstances, however, make it probable that, with all the support government can bestow, the progress of knowledge will not speedily become extensive in Russia. The state of the country is highly unfavourable to its general diffusion. The slavery in which the peasants are held checks the spirit of improvement in that numerous body of men. A man who can gain nothing by becoming wiser than his fellows, will hardly be tempted to take much trouble in acquiring superfluous accomplishments, or in bestowing them on his children. A Russian peasant has nothing that can stimulate him to the pursuit of knowledge. He sees himself fixed
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to a particular spot, from which he can have no hope of removing; and furrounded with beings ignorant and brutish like himself. His industry, if he has any, is strictly and permanently appropriated. So many days in the week, and so many hours in the day, he knows he must labour for his master: and, be his own necessities what they may, he is sensible that this portion of his time must not be encroached upon. If he possess horses or cows or instruments of his occupation, a large portion of what he can earn by them goes to the use of his master. If he has a wife and children, these also are but partially his own: his master may command their services whenever, and in whatever manner, he pleases. He is hardly permitted to stir from his hut without his master's leave, nor can he earn a single morsel of bread without his permission. If his children are to be taught any trade, it is the master who orders what that trade shall be, and who is to be the teacher: if they are to go to school, the master sends and removes them

them at his pleasure ; and if they wish to marry, they must do it agreeably to his commands. In a word, a Russian peasant depends on his master for every thing. He cannot, it is true, be sent *out* of the world without the forms of law ; but, by the negative which every master possesses against the marriage of his people, he may be prevented from coming *into* it ; and when once he has got in, his life may be made as burdensome as tyranny and caprice can desire.

It is to be expected that a power thus shamefully unlimited, will be often as shamefully abused. Accordingly the dominion of the nobles over their slaves is least pernicious when it is least active—when it leaves the peasant to vegetate in hopeless indolence. If it is exerted to inspire him with industry, it considers him merely as a machine which does more work according as it is impelled with a greater force : or as a beast of burden, which is forced to exert its strength, by the spur and the whip. The improvement of
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the minds of the peasants is a project which has not yet entered into the plan of the Russian landholders; it is a project that would be generally considered by them as chimerical, if not pernicious. The villainous policy of despotism has commonly laboured to degrade those whom it would govern; and to guard, with the most jealous circumspection, every approach through which light may break in on those whom it dooms to bondage and darkness. In consequence of this odious system, the peasants are trained to consider themselves as beings of an inferior nature; as mere instruments in the hand of their master, who ought to have no will but what he dictates, no industry but what he inspires, no emulation but what he excites.—I will not indeed say, that this is the *universal* character of the Russian peasantry (for the peasants of a few noblemen, as well as those of the crown, are fortunately an exception): but I may say, with truth, that this character is very general, through this miserable race of beings.

The great body of the peasantry being thus completely shut out from the paths of knowledge, not only is the general progress of improvement retarded; but the chance of the appearance of individual talents is also extremely narrowed. In every country, the number of men of genius who arise to refine the public taste, and improve the national character, will be in proportion to the number of those who have the means of knowledge in their power; together with the prospect of extending their reputation, and improving their fortune by their acquirements. In Russia this number is extremely small. Hence Russia has produced very few men of distinguished abilities in any line. Her most celebrated academicians have all been foreigners. She has produced historians and poets and painters; but their works will not bear a comparison with the first of the same kind, which most other nations in Europe can boast.

It would seem that, in the progress of science, the acquiring of a just conception of

of the proper object of literature is not one of the first attainments of the learned. Great literary labour, and that too sustained by considerable talents, has been wasted, by some individuals in this country, on subjects of singular inutility.

A Russian bishop has spent a great part of his life in translating the *Æneid* into Greek verse. Had he translated it into Russian verse, his country would have been indebted to him: but little praise, surely, is due to the efforts which aim only at erecting a monument to ostentation. You will not, I am persuaded, find, in the present age, another country in Europe, where industry could have been so strangely misapplied. The labours of this learned prelate ought, in justice to the fruitlessness of their object, to be classed with the manufactures of those poetical artists who worked their verses into the figure of hearts, and wings, and altars, and many other ingenious devices.

It may be made a general observation, that the few natives of Russia, who have devoted

devoted their lives to study, have attained only the praise which is due to the middle class of the learned: they have by no means equalled those who stand in the highest ranks of literature.

If the condition of the peasants be so highly unfavourable to the progress of improvement, the situation and character of the clergy are equally unfriendly to it. A small number of the superior clergy may be found eminent, among the Russians, for learning and virtue; but, with this abatement, the order consists of men either ignorant, or profligate, or both the one and the other.

A great proportion of the regular clergy consists of the lowest of the free people, who have taken sanctuary from the business of their stations in the torpor of the monasteries. Many regulations have been made to prevent this abuse; but these regulations are calculated only to prevent the state from being deprived of the labour of men whose industry might be useful; they are not intended to make the monasteries schools

schools in which men might be trained to learning and piety. The law fixes the age at which men are to be admitted, and that is an age at which it would be absurd to expect them to begin their studies with any prospect of success. It determines also the number to be received into each monastery, the degree of restraint to be imposed on them, the prayers and psalms, and homilies, and ringings of bells, of which the service must consist, and other such momentous particulars: but the only point in which such establishments can be useful, the education to which they should be subservient, is left, with only general recommendations, to the judgment of those who preside over each monastery.

From such establishments little benefit can be expected;—certainly, very little is derived from them. They however do some good. Part of those connected with them receive such an education as might have been got in the monasteries of England three centuries ago. They learn to read and write. Some of them acquire a knowledge

of the Latin language; nay, even Greek may be learnt in some monasteries. But the number of the clergy who acquire these last accomplishments is very small. I have accosted a great many of them in Latin, but have met with only a single instance of a priest who understood me. The lives of the regular clergy, instead of being devoted to literary pursuits or any other useful purpose, are slumbered away in the inaction of indolence, interrupted by the irksome frequency of prayers without devotion, and praises without sentiment.

I have often stepped into their churches to observe their service. The whole seemed to me to be artificial; and formed so exactly on the same model, that even the pauses, and tones, and gestures, which I have observed in any one church, were precisely similar to those I have observed in every other. Some parts of the service were uniformly hurried over with the most indecent rapidity. I could hardly have supposed it possible for the human organs of speech to acquire such an astonishing volubility. This portion of the service admitted

mitted of some variety in the execution, according to the strength or weakness of the lungs of him who performed it. But every clergyman whom I have heard read it, hurried over, in an uniformly sustained voice, as many words as he could possibly pronounce at one inspiration; then stopped—no matter whether at the end of a sentence, or word, or syllable, so long as to fetch breath; and so proceeded to the end of the lesson. Other portions of the service were uttered in a hollow, grumbling uniformity of tone; and with the features formed into an expression of such horror as one might suppose a coward to exhibit when the executioner was fixing the halter about his neck. Betwixt these two extremes are many intermediate gradations; but none of them approaching to the natural tones and inflexions of the voice.

The parochial clergy are still less respectable than the regular. Nothing more is necessary to the obtaining of this character than being married, and being able to read and write. The first of these qualifications

is indispensable; the others, being less essential, are more easily dispensed with. I have often heard it affirmed, that the parochial clergy are the most worthless set of men in the empire. In such a comparison it would certainly be difficult to determine to whom the preference is due. I therefore think this charge too general to be true, although there is, doubtless, abundant room for improvement in this class of men. Despised by the higher classes of society, they are reduced to the necessity of associating with the meanest of the people: hence, instead of rising to the rank of respectable citizens, and aspiring to the praise of learning and virtue, they retain the meanness of spirit, the low sensuality, and the disgusting vices of those with whom they associate.

The poorness of the ecclesiastical livings seems to be the chief cause of the degradation of the clerical character in Russia. Most of the benefices afford nothing more than a scanty subsistence, and that of the poorest kind. To qualify men for such appointments, literary accomplishments, or indeed

accomplishments of any kind, cannot be required. It is impossible to suppose that men should submit to much previous discipline, as the means of pushing themselves into a profession which can reward them with barely the articles necessary for their subsistence; a profession in which even the prizes may be considered as blanks. In this respect, the regular clergy have some advantage over the parochial; and the effects of it are apparent in the difference between the two orders. The dignitaries of the church are all chosen from the regular clergy. Every man of this order has therefore a chance, though a wondrous small one, of rising in his profession. Hence among the regular clergy some men of learning and virtue are found; while among the parochial clergy you will hardly find an individual eminent in any respect.

I shall not enter into the policy of those reasons of state which induced the sovereigns of Russia to deprive the church of her revenues. I am no advocate for an opulent ecclesiastical establishment; for I have gene-

rally observed, that riches are apt to induce habits very different from those which christianity should form in its teachers. But Russia affords the most unequivocal proof, that poverty is not less inconsistent with the purity of manners, and respectability of character, which we look for in the public teachers of a pure and benevolent religion. Priests, like other men, must possess a certain rank in society, to enable them to support a proper character: they must be raised above the temptations which spring from want, before they can be supposed solicitous about the attainment of ornamental accomplishments. The Russian clergy are not generally looked upon as gentlemen; and therefore they cannot be supposed to be very anxious about acting agreeably to a character to which they are not allowed to lay claim. They are condemned to hopeless penury; and therefore they cannot reasonably be expected to aim at attainments, which, without improving their fortune, could only reflect a painful lustre on the mean condition to which they are doomed.

Although

Although however the ecclesiastical livings be thus miserably scanty, some monasteries and churches possess great wealth, in plate, in robes, and in jewels. You can hardly imagine any thing more shewy than the appearance of the priests of these churches on their festival days. But if the wind should chance to blow aside the sacred vestment, you would probably feel a degree of disgust not easily described, at seeing shoes and stockings, and breeches and shirt, of the coarsest materials, generally ragged, and always dirty, appearing from under robes of the most superb and costly embroidery.

This situation of the clergy is highly unfavourable to the general improvement of the country. In all the enlightened nations of Europe, the priests form the most numerous body of the learned. They are also the class on whom the civilization of the lower orders of the people chiefly depends. They are more uniformly spread over the country than any other description of men of letters. The vulgar are intimately connected with them, and have a high respect

for their opinion. Hence they have it more than any other class of men in their power, to perpetuate error, or to diffuse the knowledge of the truth through the mass of the people. A priesthood, like that of Russia, who are themselves tinctured with all the prejudices of the vulgar, may serve to obstruct, but cannot promote, the progress of improvement: and while the church-livings are so scanty, it is not probable that men of abilities will be induced to enter into such an unprofitable profession.

LET.

LETTER V.

Winter Dress and Diversions of the Russians.

—*Manners and Customs.*—*Russian Jubilee.*

—*Ancient and modern Dresses of the Russians.*

St. Petersburg, January 1789.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING in my preceding letters endeavoured, in the manner of poets and historians, to interest you in my subject by a very general sketch of what is most prominent and striking in the vicissitudes, manners and customs of Russia, I shall from time to time, as leisure may permit, or circumstances and opportunities invite, communicate to you whatever may appear to be anywise instructive or amusing in this metropolis and country; which, if I may be allowed so vulgar a figure on so vast and comprehensive a subject, is a kind of half-way-

way-house between Europe and Asia. It may probably happen that I may quit and resume the same subjects again and again. But the same objects seen in different lights, and under different sets or associations of ideas, may suggest different sentiments and reflections. I do not pretend to systematise or dogmatise in any thing: and even my arrangements must be chiefly casual. I must, in all respects, plead the privileges of epistolary correspondence, free and wild, above rule or art; though faithful to truth and to nature.

The first day of the year is a great day at court: every star, garter, and ribbon, is waiting upon Her Imperial Majesty. The cannons, drums, and trumpets are all at work: these are the drawing-room furniture of an imperial palace.

It is now desperately cold weather, no less than twenty-five degrees of Reaumur. I shall be frozen to a statue. We drive about the streets and upon the Neva in sledges of a different construction from those used for travelling; some resembling a small boat, and

and others the body of an open chaise. The higher ranks in general, however, use their coaches, placed upon a sledge frame: and it is merely for an hour's amusement when they drive in sledges.

Every gentleman and lady of the lower order, as long as they have a copic to spend, lays it out cheerfully in hiring the street-sledges, ranged at all the corners *pro bono publico*. They look like so many Phaetons by the speed of their horses; only their carriages have no wheels.

The ishwhoshics, or sledge-drivers, make it a point of honour to pass every other brother of the reins; they use no whips: there is a continual struggle for such pre-eminence. Their horses are excellent; few of them worth less than twenty or thirty guineas. The ishwhoshics, by a peculiar management of the reins, make them answer the double purpose of abridle and whip; and indeed they have but to speak to their geldings if they wish them to run; they cannot stop them so easily. I have never seen horses with more spirit. Peter I. used those
street-

street-conveyances in common with his subjects; and it frequently happened that he had not money in his pocket to pay the fare; on which occasion he borrowed of some person or other to discharge it. The Russian beau attends his mistress in a sledge, sitting with her, or standing behind. The grand field where they parade is the Neva. It is the race-ground where the gentlemen display their expertness at driving, and the fleetness of their nags; a part of the frozen river is railed in for the purpose. But, in ordinary, there is racing every where, and it is well if one escapes being rode down. This gives constant exercise to the eyes in watching, as well as to the feet in getting clear off: and this, I presume, may be the cause of the quick step and look of the Petersburgers. There is a perpetual flight in the streets to preserve legs and arms; and the word *Pady*, or "Get out of the way," resounds from morning to night. Street-travelling is much cheaper here in winter than in summer. The sledges are very numerous; many of the Russians in the country,

try, whose work is put an end to by the frost, come into town with their horses, and commence hackney sledgemen. When summer returns, the gentlemen and ladies are turned out of their carriages, and again press the pavement with their feet. The wheel carriages are double and triple the expence of the winter equipage. There are no regulations for the hire: a circumstance which very frequently calls forth the most violent exertions of oratory. The ishwhoshic knows by a glance of your countenance how much to ask. If you are a foreigner, he demands five times his fare; if a Russian, he only asks double; calculating upon receiving a half of his demand from each. The hirer makes an offer *en passant*; it is refused, and he walks away: the ishwhoshic endeavours to persuade him to give more, until the gentleman is out of hearing; when, being convinced that arguments are fruitless, he drives after him, and receives the passenger without exchanging another word. Those sledges actually add to the severity of the Russian climate. The quick-

quickness of their motion, if the wind is in your face, occasions, besides the increased coldness, a sensation as if your brow was cut with a razor. Against this you must defend yourself as you can by the aid of a muff, which covering the whole of your face, you sit very comfortably while taking an airing in the dark. The ladies have the advantage of their male relations: they paint inch thick; which, if it does not add to their beauty, at least prevents them from being frost-bitten. I see the fair damsels galloping in twenty degrees of Reaumur, without even a bonnet; while the sons of Mars, swords, bucklers, *and all*, are rolled up in fable. Vanity in our sex has the same effect as paint in the other. A Russian beau of the first magnitude despises a warm dress, as it spoils his shapes—he struts in silk stockings, a hat and cockade; and as often as the cold will permit, he throws his fur cloak aside, to display his silk breeches and satin vest.

The police are very attentive to preserve the people from using improper freedoms,
or

or exposing themselves to this ungracious climate. The theatres, and all places of public amusement, are shut when the cold is seventeen degrees of Reaumur. A custom of the Russian nobility and gentry makes this regulation absolutely necessary. Asiatic pomp prevails here, as much as at Ispahan or Delhi, in defiance of ice and storms. They make their attendants wait with their carriages wherever they go, for one, or for ten hours, as it happens, let the cold be ever so violent. The miserable grins of these half-frozen wretches convince me that it is not their choice: the coachmen are sometimes frozen to death upon their boxes. I shall speak of the hardness of the natives when I have seen it. Could I forget for a moment such barbarity, this affected pomp of frozen attendants would be truly laughable. Every gentleman, who is entitled by his rank rather than by his fortune to be drawn by six horses, must have that number: but no regard is had to quality, size, or colour; so that it is common to see among the six horses four of different

ent tints. The coachmen have beards hanging to their girdles, and from every hair depends an icicle: the postillions are all young boys blowing their fingers: add to this portrait the sheep-skin doublet, and a cap of the same stuff, as black as if the skins were already prepared for shoe-leather. To contrast this spectacle, the great man within, and his two or three liverymen behind the chaise, are covered with gold lace. Many of the nobility go to the other extreme; and the magnificence of their carriages, their horses, and their servants, is becoming only of crowned heads.

The Russian jubilee has commenced. Ice-hills are erected upon the Neva, and all the apparatus of a Bartholomew fair. The river is crowded with the best and with the worst company: much is the noise of men, and dogs, and boys. There must be at least thirty thousand people assembled. Her Imperial Majesty Catharine II. drove amidst her subjects, in a sledge, followed by several others with the attending officers of the court. A party of the hussar guards escorted

escorted Her Majesty. The same day appeared the Grand Duke and Duchesse; and after them came their children, the young Grand Dukes and Duchesses. We had with us the whole imperial house of Russia, and they were received with every demonstration of loyalty and affection. The severe winter procured the Neva this honour. These assemblies do not take place upon the river unless when the ice has attained such a thickness as may insure safety. There is no riot with all this bustle; not a furly look nor a single blow given or received. The Russians are so busy in drinking, singing, and laughing, that they have no time for quarrelling. The police are watchful; but there does not appear to be much reason for their vigilance. The temples of Bacchus and of Venus now open their gates. These are built here of a construction proper for the climate, having stoves, folding doors, and double windows. The staggering votaries of the former make the air resound with their songs. A Russian never walks by himself when he gets drunk,

drunk, if he can lay hold of a friend: three or four stagger in concert, and, very socially, knock their heads together. They get drunk in company, and rise and fall as one man. They do not tipple for hours; they swallow as much in two or three minutes as completely does the business they came about. If there be no sophas at hand, they can make a shift to lie wherever they tumble. With regard to love and to dress, a beard a yard long is in high estimation among the fair nymphs of Russia. The Scotch have a merry air, beginning with

The carle he came o'er the craft

With his beard new shaven.

Such a preparation in a Russian lover would go near to ruin his suit. The commonalty have still a great veneration for this fringe of human hair, notwithstanding the efforts of their monarchs to root it out; and it is only those depending upon government, in the army and navy, who have yet complied with the custom and wish of the Court. Those who retain their beards
retain

retain likewise the ancient dress; the long swaddling coat, either of skins, or of coarse cloth lined with skins, in winter; and in summer, of cloth only. About their middle they have a sash of any colour; but what they mostly affect is green or yellow. They wear trowsers instead of breeches and stockings: their limbs are, besides, wrapt in manyfolds of woollen stuffs to keep them warm; and above all they wear boots. Their shirts are fashioned as women's; their necks exposed to the cold, and as hard and impenetrable, from this practice, as a piece of adamant. Government continues to exert every nerve to compel the subjects to adopt the German dress. The clergy alone excepted, none can procure any place, any favour from Court, upon other condition than banishing the Asiatic sheep-skin robes. The worn-out veteran retires with a pension, upon the express terms of never again assuming the habit of his fathers. But so zealously attached are the multitude to former manners, and so honourable do they esteem

them, that a Russian dressed in his beard and gown tells you by his looks that he has not prostituted the memory of his ancestors.

The dress of the women is the reverse of the men both in fashion and colour; every part of it being as short and tight as decency will allow, and as gaudy as their copics will admit. The dress of the Russian women is exactly the same with that of the highland women in Scotland: both have the short jacket, the striped petticoat, and the tartan plaid; and both too, in general, have a napkin rolled about their head. The Russian women are, however, far more elegant and rich in their attire: nor is gold lace wanting to set off their charms, any more than the art of painting. The young generation are modernizing these antic vestments; the stiff embroidered napkin is supplanted by one of flowing silk; the jacket and petticoat are of mullin or other fine stuffs; and the plaid is exchanged for a silk or satin cloak, in the cold season lined with fur. The better class of females wear velvet

vet boots. The drefs of the higher ranks is after the French and Englifh fashion: and all muft have a covering of fur fix months of the year. Thus equipped, the prince and the peafant are hurled in their chaifes and fledges through the dreary Scythian winter.

LETTER VI.

*At Petersburg the most striking Assemblage of
all Nations.—The native good Taste of the
Russians for Music.—The Russian Theatre.*

St. Petersburg, January 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I FEEL myself here as in another world ;
the dress, the manners, and customs of
the people are so different from those of
other nations in Europe.

Besides the variety of nations which
compose the Russian empire, in my daily
walk through the city I meet with English,
Danes, French, Swedes, Italians, Spaniards,
Portuguese, Venetians, Poles, Germans, Per-
sians, and Turks : the last, prisoners from
Oczakow. This assembly is a natural
masquerade, and no city upon earth pre-
sents any amusement of this kind in such
perfection

perfection as Petersburg. In other great cities the variety of strangers is not so distinguishable as here; owing to their accommodating themselves to the dress of the country in which they reside or sojourn, in order to prevent the mob from staring at them.

In Petersburg there is no need of this compliance: let foreigners be dressed ever so oddly, they will find in every lane subjects in the Russian empire to keep them in countenance. She brings into this ball her various swarms, from the snowy mountains of Kamtschatka to the fertile plains of the Ukraine—a space of 4000 miles!—Siberians, Tongusians, Calmucs, and an endless train of Tartar nations, the Fins, the Cossacs, &c.

Petersburg is a strange city even to the Russians: it increases daily with new recruits from every corner of the empire. Russia resembles an heir newly come to his estate. She is only beginning to learn, and seems struck with her own importance.

This young heir has got his different mas-

ters to attend him : the English master is teaching him the art of navigation and commerce ; the French, as usual, to dance and to dress ; the Italian is drawing plans for his house, and teaching him to sing ; the German makes him wheel to the right and to the left, and teaches him all the other arts of war.

The truth is, the Russians are going on too fast in affecting as well as attaining improvement. Foreigners have put too many things into their heads ; and, I believe, are picking their pockets, by the idle schemes with which they amuse them. The Russians, in general, look upon foreigners as a kind of superior beings, in regard to the arts and sciences. They value themselves chiefly upon their valour, and the strength of their army and navy.

The improvement that first attracted my attention was the theatre : in the depth of a six months winter, this naturally attracts us from other objects perhaps more valuable. They have French, German, and Russian comedians, and an Italian opera. The masquerade is a favourite amusement
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at this dreary season. There are such great distinctions of ranks without doors, that they are happy at times to sink and forget these in a masque. On the contrary, in England, we are so much upon a level, without and within doors, that it would be no amusement or relaxation to repeat the same scenes: and this I take to be the reason that we have few masquerades.

The French actors are highly esteemed; and I assure you the Russian players are no less so, in comedy. The latter have a peculiar turn for works of humour, but in tragedy they cut a poor figure. Tragedy has no charms in their eyes; and I am very much of their way of thinking. There is a sufficient number of melancholy scenes presented every day in real life: I prefer, with the Moscovites, to sing and dance while we may. This turn for humour in the Russians is attended with a fault: their comedy too often approaches to farce. They enjoy with all their souls their native operas; in which are introduced rural scenery and manners, and native airs. Were I not
afraid

afraid of your calling me Goth, I would tell you I prefer many of the Russ songs to the Italian: they are simple, but exquisitely pleasing; the Russians forget every thing else while they are listening to them. Even among the waggoners and other rustics, we shall sometimes find five or six dividing their voices into as many keys, and producing a concert no way contemptible. They are self-taught, and do not understand what tenor, or bass, or treble means. I wonder the Italians have not pretended that some David Rizzio had visited this country, seeing they are jealous of their quavers.

The Russian instruments of music are simple as their songs. Of these the balileka is the favourite of the common people. This is a kind of guitar with two strings: the performer places it upon his knee, and strikes the wire with such art, as to move some corresponding chord in the breast of every Russian within hearing. Several of their other instruments resemble those of the ancient Romans; particularly the pipe of

Pan is matched by their whistle of nine or ten joints, placed at each other's sides, of unequal lengths.

You must always expect to hear poetry mentioned with music. Russia has produced two excellent poets in Somonosoff and Sumorokoff. Before their time, the Russian stage was disgraced by burlesque obscenities, equally offensive to good sense and decency: and these indecencies were often incorporated with scenes borrowed from scripture. We are told by Stael-hen, that he has seen the Empress Elizabeth's maids of honour act a comedy, sometimes in unfurnished houses, and at others in a hay-loft about the court stables. Other strolling companies acted in the public squares: their exhibitions were often little better than the buffooneries acted at Bartholomew fair in Smithfield.

Fedor Wolkot, the GARRICK of Russia, after exhibiting for some time such scenes as have been just mentioned, introduced upon his stage the plays of Lomonosoff and Sumorokoff. Wolkot painted the decorations
of

of his theatre with his own hands, and assisted in the making up of dresses. He very frequently gave a play gratis, in order to inspire his countrymen with a taste for the drama. But though the pieces of Lomonosoff and Sumorokoff were well received, his countrymen, for many years, continued to prefer before all theatrical entertainments, the riotous amusements of the tavern. The Empress Elizabeth in the year 1752 brought Wolkot and his company to St. Petersburg, where, upon the court stage, he played the tragedies of Sumorokoff. In order to improve this company, she established a national theatre, on which Wolkot was the chief actor. And for the purpose of exciting a spirit of emulation, she appropriated about a thousand pounds sterling, to be divided amongst the actors according to their abilities; and allowed them, besides, to act once a week for the public and their own benefit. Besides all this, the Court bore the whole expence of the play. Theatrical improvements were made from time to time; and along with the productions of
Sumorokoff

Sumorokoff translations of Moliere and some other French comic writers were played. The Empress Catharine augmented the sum appropriated by Elizabeth for the salary of the comedians to about four thousand pounds sterling. Two celebrated actors, Wolkot and his brother, were ennobled; and the Empress gave them estates and peasants (for the former are in no value in Russia without the latter —so that in the north as well as in the south of Europe *manerial* lords are found among players*. Talents of all kinds ought to be rewarded: but is it not extravagant, and indeed indecent, to confound a good player with a great general? a Roscius with a Scipio? When Catharine gave land with the rank of nobility to the Wolkots, what more could she reserve to Prince Potemkin and

* This alludes to the circumstance of Mr. Garrick's purchasing the manor of Hendon. This, however, confers not any rank or order of nobility. It might have been purchased by a hangman if he had been rich enough: and it has now actually passed into the hands of an apothecary.

Count

Count Romanzow? I blush to think that players, and some silly poets, as well as patriots and heroes, are to be found in Westminster Abbey: Henderson and Garrick as well as the Duke of Marlborough and Earl of Chatham.

LET-

LETTER VII.

A Tragi-comedy performed by Russian Strolling Players—An Historical Play written by Her Imperial Majesty Catharine II.

Ingria, near St. Petersburg, Feb. 1789.

I AM just arrived from attending two Russian village girls to the theatre. A number of strolling players from St. Petersburg have honoured the villagers, residing in the midst of a wood, with a visit. The theatre of this straggling village consists of one room about twenty-five feet square. A blanket, very properly in this season and climate, supplied the place of a curtain.

The manager had, this morning, paraded the village, dressed like a harlequin, and beating a drum. Another of the actors performed upon the French horn. They
promised

promised to the inhabitants of the village an entertainment consisting of divers curious and novel pieces, tragical and comical. The performance did not begin until the arrival of the great folks, viz. the village bailiff, his wife, and daughter, who were received by all the audience with repeated marks of applause. The gentleman and ladies being seated in the stage box, on the end of the first form nearest the actors, the blanket rose.

The first act consisted of the School for Scandal, with abridgments, however, as well as variations; which were the most interesting, as they shewed the taste and turn of the Russians. The manager's wife, in the character of Lady Teazle, having given ear to the addresses of her gallant, lies down upon the floor, and a mock engagement takes place before this delicate audience. Bearded faces pushed forward in every direction to behold this amorous exhibition, and grinned a very high degree of satisfaction. The ladies tittered, and held down their heads. Full of love and
love's

love's disports, the pair fall asleep, and are caught in this situation by Sir Peter Teazle, who finds both Joseph and his lady without any screen before them. Imagine to yourself the consternation of Lady Teazle, when she was awaked by a kick with her husband's foot; and Joseph with the application of a whip across his shoulders. The frightened Joseph rose, and in a hurry ran off without pronouncing one sentiment. The unfortunate fair one wept, and in a song told us how the base man had deceived her.

Another comedy, the title of which I do not recollect, was presented in the second act. The principal character was performed by the same lady, the manager's wife, who again was nearly caught tripping in an exhibition similar to the former.

Tragedy drew her dagger in the third act. The cup remained with the audience, who refreshed themselves between the acts with brandy. A vaunting foreigner arrives in Russia: by his ribbon I found they meant Prince Nassau. He tells the audience that the Russian officers could do nothing; and promises to do wonders for her Imperial
VOL. I. H Majesty.

Majesty. The other tragedian, in the character of a Russian nobleman and naval officer, takes fire at this, and, having borrowed a white jacket and trowsers from one of the auditory, and fixing the order of St. George upon his stately shoulders, he challenges this boasting stranger. Many thrusts were given and received; at last, as might be expected, Prince Nassau fell: the blanket fell too by accident, and covered his bleeding body from the rejoicing company, who expressed the greatest encomiums upon the champion of their country, and detestation of foreigners.

A new historical play was lately produced at the grand theatre at Petersburg. Report gives it to the pen of the Empress. It alludes to the ancient history of Russia, and of the connection between the Russian and Grecian sovereigns, and of their intermarriages together. Some petty princes who disturbed the primitive dukedom of Russia, whose capital city was Kioff, are brought in chains before the Czar. Kioff, situated upon the elevated banks of the river Nieper, is

is pictured in a beautiful scene. The galley fleet appear afloat upon the river. The Duke is busied in the hall of audience, receiving and sending away dispatches to various provinces, and giving orders to his surrounding ministers.

His son the young Duke sets off for Byzantium, and marries a Grecian princess. The royal pair visit in his capital their Russian father. A moveable scene represents the distant march of their escort; numerous armies, waggons, camels loaded with precious articles: squadrons of cavalry guard the young Princess and her husband in their triumphal car.

The heralds with trumpets announce their arrival. The procession passes along the stage: the officers of the Grecian court, in their proper habits and insignia: the Princess's maids lead or follow in the procession, according to their ranks. The Duke receives them in his hall of audience. The young Prince conducts his veiled bride to the presence. The superior lady of the Russian court, who appears to be a priestess, approaches

proaches the Grecian Empress, and pours myrrh or other pounded herbs upon her head. The Duke entreats her to unveil: an officer of the court, or priest, at a respectful distance, touches the Princess's veil with a wand, and lifts it off. She appears crowned, and in the Grecian habit; and making her obeisance to the Duke, he embraces and salutes her. Attended to her chamber by her own and the Russian female *maids of honour*, the latter undress the Princess, and again dress her in the Russian habit. The Princess resumes her veil, and, seated at the head of her ladies, the Russian female dancers and singers entertain her with their performances. The Princess, having remained for some time at Kioff, takes leave of the Duke, inviting him to visit the court of Byzantium.

The next scene again presents to view the city of Kioff. The Duke embarks in his galley, for Byzantium, and sails down the Nieper. As the entertainments given at his own court were simple, and characteristic of the manners of his nation, so the splendid reception he met with from his Grecian daughter

daughter was equally so of the power and greatness of her empire. The heralds announce the arrival of the Duke. The Grecian Emperor and Empress rise from their throne in the audience chamber, and receive him, as do the numerous and splendid courtiers, with every mark of honour and reverence. The Duke's heralds read a list of his titles. I suspect, from the length of this list, that Catharine II. had added several not then existing in the persons of the Russian Dukes.

A table is superbly covered: the goblets and cups were of massy silver, sent from the palace at Petersburg. The whole service was of the same metal, as well as many pieces of pure gold.

The mock sovereigns wore crowns of gold, sparkling with real diamonds of great value. A guard stood behind the scenes to prevent any attempt upon the rich scenery, which had never before been introduced into theatres.

The Grecian Empress sat at the head of the table, the Duke upon her right, and her

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husband

husband upon her left hand. The courtiers and ladies of the court stood around them, but other attendants waited at table. At intervals a band of music, Grecian dancers and singers, perform before the august assemblage. The sovereigns rise from table. The Duke leads the Empress to the amphitheatre, which appears in the next scene erected round the stage. This presented a new and uncommon prospect. It was crowded with the gentlemen and ladies of the Grecian court, and with the Russian courtiers who had accompanied the Duke in their national habits. The Grecian and Russian guards in their ancient national uniforms filled up the remaining space. The Duke, the Empress, and her husband, were seated in the same gallery upon the right, but divided from their courtiers by a partition; and their place otherways distinguished. The Grecian fencers, gladiators, wrestlers, shooters with the bow, in their turns displayed their dexterity: sometimes they contended in parties, sometimes only two fought for the prize. The foot racers wheeled

wheeled around the posts, and pressed on to the goal. The conquerors were crowned with laurel; they carried too the arms of the vanquished, who walked around the stage behind them; and all, as they passed the sovereigns and courtiers, saluted them.

A second stage was erected beneath, and at the further end of the amphitheatre. A representation of the ancient drama was exhibited. Two actors alternately appeared, and delivered discourses from the plays of Euripides. The audience were transported into old times, and imagined themselves seated in Rome or in Athens. At the conclusion of this drama, consisting of several acts, between which the audience were entertained, as usual, with music, a stair was constructed to the gallery where the sovereigns and ministers were seated; they descended by this stair, railed with the bucklers, the banners and spears of the conquerors in the preceding games. The curtain dropped amidst the huzzas of the guards and the sound of trumpets.

LETTER VIII.

Easter Holidays.—The River Neva.—Russian Climate.—Winter Market at Petersburg, a great Curiosity.—The Benefit which the Russians derive from severe Frosts.

St. Petersburg, April 1789.

THE Easter holidays have ended, and the Bartholomew gambols are again renewed, but not upon the ice. The Neva is beginning to shake off its icy chain: it is only when he is a bound slave that people venture to tread upon him.

One of the squares of the city was fixed upon for the exhibitions. Wooden huts are erected, within which the multitude are entertained with *brandy, and theatrical amusements*. Besides the dramatic scenes in those huts, there were a variety of sways, upon
which

which the Russian lads and lasses mounted together into the air. I saw several Turks swinging along with their conquerors. I was happy to see the poor Mahomedan prisoners in such good spirits. Indeed they are treated here with much humanity. Peter I. had, no doubt, brought the model of those entertainments from London or Amsterdam, as the best to be had at that time. They do not appear to be of Russian origin. It is surprising to view the first nobility of the empire, driving in their carriages around the circle which holds the rabble, staring at one another, and at the mob, for hours together.

The Neva, by the continual frosts since the beginning of November last, has attained an amazing degree of thickness, and it would seem to require a whole summer to melt it. Were the river to remain shut until the ice was melted, there would be no navigation on it before July or August. The current of the river, when the ice turns weak and porous by the melting of the snow upon its surface, hurls this body away and clears the

Neva;

Neva; and the Neva, in like manner, clears the lake of Lodoga. Soon after the Neva ice is gone, the rotten ice of the Lodoga is drawn into the river by its current. Nature has cut out a river from most of the northern lakes, to drain them of their ice. The intense heat of the polar summer assists in this work, and to render them soon navigable for the purpose of fishing and transporting of merchandise. An intense sun might reduce the ice to a perfect honey-comb: but, while it floats, it incommodes all navigation, and therefore the rivers are absolutely necessary to disperse it.

It has been asserted, that the northern winter is the best season for transporting merchandise, from the uninterrupted smoothness of the roads over the frozen land and water. This is so far true: it accelerates the transporting of goods in sledges, from inland parts to the principal towns situated near lakes and rivers, to be sent by water in summer, to the great marts of trade, as Petersburg, Archangel, and Riga: but the goods could not be brought to these last ports by land carriage,

carriage, from one or two thousand miles distance, allowing the roads to be ever so smooth, without raising the price to an enormous height. It is by shipping alone that the Russian commerce can effectually be supported. Petersburg is supplied by land carriage in the winter with provisions; not because land carriage is cheaper or more convenient than carriage by water in summer, but because the provisions cannot be brought at any other season with safety. A live stock cannot be brought to market at the same expence, as when killed and packed at the place where it was fed: and besides the expence of driving, a live stock would require to be fatted at their arrival. When killed, cold weather is the only season, in a country where the summer is so warm, for transporting the carcases to market, fresh as well as to salt, and conveying provisions to the cellars in distant towns for summer use. Wild game, and fish in particular, could not be conveyed fresh, in any other manner, from a distance of many hundred miles, than in a frozen state. I
need

need only add, that fish here is the principle article of consumption. The frozen market in Petersburg is a curiosity peculiar to Russia. It is not held upon the river, but in one of the great bazars, or squares, in the suburbs. Here is a very extensive picture of dead life—a kind of resurrection of quadrupeds. The peasants who sell this collection to the inhabitants, place the dead animals, stripped of their skins, upon their legs, and in different postures. A stranger beholds too, with wonder, an innumerable variety of the feathered creation—an extensive collection of zoology: every tint with which nature has painted the feathered inhabitants of earth and air, is strewed around at the foot of tyrant man! The timid hare, clothed in his winter robes, is not permitted to wear them long, but is dragged to swell the various feast.

This vast wholesale warehouse supplies the other bazars in the city, where beef is cut down and sold in the smallest quantities. The fish, from a size not two inches in length, to the fine salmon and sturgeon,
from

from three to five feet, are heaped in frozen piles. The young fry of the lakes and rivers should not be suffered to be sold in the markets: it will in time exhaust the liberal gift which Providence has bestowed upon this nation, in filling her lakes and rivers with every variety of the finny kind.

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LETTER IX.

Of the Tartar Army at Petersburg.—Reflections upon War.—Of the Propriety of driving the Turks out of Europe—and giving a King to Greece from the Descendants of Peter the Great.

St. Petersburg, April 1789.

DEAR SIR,

THIS is the most disagreeable season of the year in this province. The melting of the snow renders the streets and roads a perfect mire. The citizens are picking their way through a sea of mud. This forenoon summer was proclaimed in the skies, while yet the head of the gulph of Finland betwixt Petersburg and Cronstadt is a field of ice, and for many leagues into the ocean: loud peals of thunder rent the clouds. Alas! the approach of summer

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proclaims

proclaims likewise the approach of war. The streets are daily crowded with troops marching to the frontiers of Sweden. The temple of Janus is opened. I heard from my window the trumpet's shrill sound: I went out and followed the regiments, and mixed with the crowd attending them. "May you conquer our enemies, and re-
"turn victorious and unhurt!" said a poor peasant to a soldier; and, while he spoke, the tears gushed from his eyes. The soldier stepped aside and kissed him. The inhabitants look wishfully at those going to fight for them. The soldiers seem pleased with this mark of tender concern, and grasp their muskets firmer in their hands.

Several thousand Tartars, Baskeers, and Kirgees are arrived and encamped near the city. They are all horsemen: poor miserable looking creatures, especially the Kirgees. They resemble a band of gypsies, and their encampment keeps up the resemblance. Their tents are of poles covered with rags; and in addition to these, a few ruinous huts. Their arms are bows and arrows

rows and a kind of spear; a piece of stick with an iron spike or nail at the end of it. Their horses are very small but spirited animals, continually fighting with one another. The horse furniture is a wooden saddle softened with rags, a very useful article in a Tartar equipage; and a bridle made of a leather thong or bit of rope of a simple construction. But as the Tartars speak to their horses, they have the less occasion for spurs or bridles. The Tartars observe no kind of order in camps, and very little in their march: they have no uniform, though a blueish colour is the prevailing fashion among them. The fashion of their coat differs not much from the Russian, but it is shorter and with open sleeves; over which the officers wear a long robe of scarlet or other gaudy colour, ornamented with narrow gold lace, embroidered more or less according to their dignity. Their caps are of skins, with long flaps hanging about their necks and ears. The common men are so ragged and dirty, that one is at a loss to describe their habiliments. Their face is short and

and rather oval, with high cheek bones, aquiline noses, small lively eyes, tawny complexions, and low stature. They are very awkward in their gait in walking, but quite at home upon horse-back; and they delight in inclining their bodies to one or other side of the horse, to shew how easily they can recover themselves. They frequently practise shooting at marks, and seem to have no ideas but such as relate to their horses and their quivers. The officers have pistols and sabres richly ornamented with silver and gold. The armour of their men is very mean; they have all of them sabres, but are ill enough provided with muskets, with and without locks. They are not fond of fighting with or against musketry: what work they do in battle is done quickly, and loading takes up time: they beat or are beaten in a moment. I am at a loss to guess what service they can be of in Finland, whose rocks and mountains, so unlike the plains of Tartary, will be another world to those tribes, and overturn all their schemes of war. They may, indeed, butcher the defenceless peasants; but

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I hope

I hope this disgrace will not happen to the Russian arms. The strictest regard to the laws of war can alone alleviate its horrors, or adorn its triumphs. No situation, no provocation, no necessity will apologize for cruelty. Would a monument hung round with human heads, like the gates of the kings of Persia and Dahomy, who drench every passion in the blood of their subject slaves, transmit a hero's name with honour to posterity? Such might have been erected for Montcalm at Quebec. The order or permission of that accomplished and intrepid commander to the savage allies of France, to commit wanton acts of barbarity, tarnishes the crown of glory that otherwise would have been his due: and even the sacred name of Wolfe is sullied by permitting retaliation.

I lament the war of Sweden with Russia, and earnestly pray for a speedy termination of it. With regard to the Turks, the enemies of the Christian name, I could wish to see them dismissed from Europe. Notwithstanding the follies and vices of Rome, I

cannot patiently behold the murderers of the Greeks and Romans. If Greece and Rome gave us the first models of laws, religion, arts, and sciences, is it grateful in us to suffer, and even to protect, a monument of their disgrace? Would it be cruel to send the Ottomans to inhabit the fertile plains of Asia Minor, now deserts for want of culture? Would it be illiberal to separate the Greeks and Turks, to prevent thereby the daily torments endured by the descendants of the Athenians? to abridge the empire, and to shorten the reign of barbarism? The ancient connection of Moscovy with Greece, through the intermarriages of their sovereigns, points out the Imperial House of Russia as the legal heirs to Turkey in Europe.

I do not conceive that a junction of the Turkish and Russian empires would be favourable to the general balance of power, or to individual interests. But, perhaps, were the Grecian crown placed upon the head of a younger branch of the House of Peter the First, it might preserve the political balance

of power, much better than to suffer the Turks to remain, to be played off, at the pleasure of intriguing politicians, against the repose of Europe. There would be no danger from the family compact of Greece and Russia, unless it could be proved that the Houses of Bourbon and of Holstein have increased their power by their family connections. The history of nations, as well as that of individual families, abundantly proves, that opposition of interest and mutual jealousies are able to divide brothers and cousins just as easily as any other neighbours. There cannot happen a more favourable period than the present to give Greece a king and liberty, and to preserve those few relics of her former splendour which still remain. To raise Greece again from her ashes, and to make her again the seat of learning and of elegance, would do more honour to the powers of Europe, and to humanity, than all their political balance schemes and intrigues; which as yet have only served to make mankind more wretched: their cabinets have been the nurseries of war and legal murder.

On

On this subject it may be further observed, that the Tartarian hordes have for ages continued to disturb Europe, and still continue to do so. The present war in Europe is occasioned by disputes of which they are the foundation. After having themselves ceased to be a terror to European powers, bloody strife still subsists relating to those vagabonds, altogether degenerated from their former character; which, though fierce, was distinguished by many noble and manly virtues. It throws unspeakable disgrace upon Europeans, to permit the Tartars and Saracens of Asia and Africa still to disturb their repose: and what adds to this disgrace, Europeans keenly engage in quarrels with one another, while they not only put up with every indignity from insolent barbarians, but even take a side against those European powers who have the spirit to attempt their extirpation.

LETTER X.

Former State of Russia.—Of the Tartar Nations. — Of the Conquest of China by the Tartars.

St. Petersburg, April 1789.

THE Russians, not many years ago, were in the same state in which the Tartars now are; and even after they settled in the country of Moscovy they continued under bondage to the Tartar nations, who surrounded them on all sides. The Czar Ivan Vasilivitch I. released his people from this degrading situation, and his successor Vasilivitch II. effectually rooted out those free-booters, and overawed them in their turn. From this period the Russian monarchs extended their conquests; and, by a rapid progress, the vast regions from the banks of the Nieper to Kamschatka, which views from its shores the American mountains, a space of four thousand miles, acknowledged their sceptre.

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The most northerly parts of Siberia are inhabited by Fins and Tartar tribes in the lowest state of civilization; the southern provinces border upon Tartary, properly so called.

There are many of the Tartars still independent, if we call by that name the liberty of running from the protection of one sovereign to that of another. The Russian Government gives them every encouragement to settle in Siberia, and in the kingdoms of Casan and Astrakan; and the Tartars begin to shew a disposition to become husbandmen. The Kalmuc hordes are the most obstinate: they dwell near the Wolga, and maintain themselves by fishing and with their flocks and herds. They refuse the name of Tartars, because the word signifies a vagrant.

The Kalmucs are esteemed by the other tribes as a superior class; the Kirgees are much inferior in character as well as in wealth: yet I could not help looking with veneration upon our Scythian fathers, though in rags. The Kalmucs deny them. The Kirgees, Baskeers, and other Tartars,

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deny

deny the Fins; the Fins detest the Laplanders; and the Laplanders, buried in their earthen caves, esteem themselves of divine origin. This is the best ridicule of family pride and connections that I have met with.

The Fins are quiet and industrious, and consequently superior in some respects to all the others. "But," say the Kalmucs, "they are farmers—they till the ground; "they are clowns: we are huntsmen and "warriors, the immediate descendants of "Zinghis Khan and Tamerlane, conquer- "ors of India and China*!"

The Tartars are, at this day, divided into four grand divisions: the first inhabit their native plains of Tartary, under their khans; the second are mixed with the Chinese, under the same government and laws; the third, having submitted to the

* The Indian nations in America admit the superiority of the Europeans in arts and sciences and all kinds of refinement, but they despise them for submitting to industrious labour: in like manner the ancient Caledonians, inhabitants of the mountainous regions, and addicted to hunting and predatory war, by way of contempt called the Low Country Scots *peighs*, or labourers.

government

government of Russia or to its protection, dwell in Siberia and upon the banks of the Wolga; the fourth acknowledge the Sultan of Constantinople for their chief, and pitch their tents in Little Tartary: the last of these divisions arrived, under the command of a descendant of Zinghis Khan, at the time the Crimea was in the possession of the Genoese, whom they drove out by the assistance of the Turks: hence the alliance between these two hordes. The Turks consider the Tartars as slaves; and their princes of the House of Ghyri-a-Gheary, their first leader, receive an annual subsidy from the Porte, upon condition of appearing in the field with an army in the Turkish wars. The Turks depose their princes at pleasure; but they appoint a khan always from among the relations of the Ghyrian race. Those people have partly changed masters since the conquest of the Crimea by the Russians; but they are still attached to their old lords from habit and simularity of religion; and many have deserted to the Turkish provinces adjacent.

Emigrations from the mother country at
various

various periods filled the country adjoining. The new settlers, following the example of the Crimeans, adopted in part the Mahomedan religion, and became allies of the Porte. The Moguls, or Kalmucs, settling upon the east of the Wolga, were entirely separated from their brethren in Little Tartary. The Czars of Moscow permitted them to live in their own way, only upon condition of remaining quiet, and paying a trifling tax in their lamb-skins; which are famous and universally worn in Russia. As the Kalmucs, notwithstanding those gentle terms, were much addicted to lawless disorder and plunder, the Czars were more than once obliged to curb their insolence and depredations. They could claim a superiority to the Crim Tartars but in one point—their steady adherence to the religion of the Lama; both pursued the vocations of hunting and robbing. The Crimeans were distinguished by the name of Mahomedan Tartars, and considered as apostates.

Mountainous countries are said to be most favourable to liberty; and yet the Tartars

tars in their wide plains boast of freedom : their emigrations, to seek the protection of foreign monarchs, however, prove that they have got tyrants at home ; who, no doubt, contend in arms with one another : in consequence of which, the defeated are happy to find an asylum in other countries. The freedom of unpolished nations, indeed, consists merely in lawless plunder and disputes. When a wandering nation is prevailed upon to settle, and to submit to the laws of their prince ; he ill deserves the name of tyrant, who endeavours by laws, by commerce, and by other means, to reform his subjects, even in spite of themselves, and make them capable of liberty.

None but the speculative enthusiast will ever brand the name of Peter I. nor of any prince who pursues measures similar to his, with the name of tyrant. There cannot be a stronger proof of a monarch's wishing his people to be free, than that of his taking every step to render them capable and worthy of freedom. The Kitan or Kathan Tartars were the first conquerors of China, and

and gave their name to it, Cathay ; by which name it is still known to the Tartars and Russians ; who call too the stuff Nankin, the famous manufacture of China, Catayka. These first conquerors, in conjunction with the original natives, built the celebrated wall, to keep out the numerous swarms that crowded after the Kitans to their good fortune. The Kitans and Chinese were, however, overpowered successively by the Mogul and Tongusian Tartars. It is a prince of the last horde that now sits upon the Chinese throne.

The ruin of the Chinese empire would have naturally followed its conquest by the different nations of Tartars, had the Tartars then been the barbarous race they now are ; and a second Rome have tumbled before the Goths of Scythia. The Romans, unable to save themselves, saved China. In their expeditions into Tartary, they left behind them a taste for the fine arts ; and, no doubt, many stragglers of their legions. The Tartars had, besides, in their wars with India, procured a taste for industry as well as plunder ;

plunder; and monuments of ancient grandeur, the remains of noble cities and other works, incontestably prove that Tartary was formerly the seat of elegance and arts. Those tribes who boast their resemblance to the ancient Moguls by their present vagrant life, expose their ignorance and degeneracy.

It would appear that China had drawn into it all the enterprising and industrious Tartars, for those left behind fell off from the reputation of their forefathers; or else the success of one tribe in the conquest of that country, raised a similar spirit in their brethren at home; which, however, subsided at last after many conflicts among themselves, in subjection to one or other of the great powers around them. That part of Tartary which sent China her present lords is under the same laws, and its natives still acknowledge the Emperor of China for their khan: they have several times attempted, with the assistance of the Chinese, to subjugate other kingdoms in Tartary, but have been repeatedly driven back by some
brave

brave and numerous hordes, which yet remain to defend the tombs of their ancestors. The Moguls and Tongusians, when they passed the great wall, were not one hundredth part so numerous as the Chinese: a civil war among themselves gave an opportunity of attack to a few daring invaders. By adopting the dress and manners of the vanquished, they prevented them from seeing this inferiority of numbers. The Tartar language, also, bearing a near affinity to the Chinese, the conquered could not distinguish, in the armies of the usurpers, who were Tartars, or who their countrymen; nor know, of course, with what probability of success they might be attacked.

China may be considered as a province of Tartary. It has certainly, from the earliest period of time, been peopled by refugees from this mother country, flying from tyranny and oppression. The mountains afforded them protection, and the delightful climate and rich soil easily invited those who had fled from war to arts of peace: it was probably owing, in like manner, to defeat
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and oppression, that colonies were driven into China by sea from Egypt. The Tartars poured forth on their neighbours in every direction, and carried their victorious arms and made conquests in India, Greece, Italy, Germany, France: in a word, in every quarter in Asia and Europe; nay, even in Africa. A great deal has of late years been written, and not a little of this by men of real genius and learning, on the subject of Tartary; among whom Mr. Bailli and Mr. Pallas are particularly distinguished. There are monuments, both natural and artificial, that carry the philosopher, who surveys that wide zone of the earth, back to the remotest antiquity—periods antecedent to written records, and even to oral tradition. Tartary has probably, and indeed without any doubt, undergone many vicissitudes as well as other countries, particularly champaign countries of great fertility and extent. The Etruscans were a civilized people in Italy before the Romans: and other nations, in that fine country, were, no doubt, in civilization and knowledge prior to the Etruscans.

Etruscans. The irruptions of those multitudes that, issuing from the Tartarian plains, over-ran nations far and near, did not, however, take place in any period of refinement; but in a period when tribes and nations are most warlike, and most disposed to move from their own territories, and to invade those of others: when they have, indeed, like the ancient Germans, begun to cultivate the ground, and raise provisions for an army; but, when they retain that disposition and habit of moving from place to place, which is natural to men who have not laid aside those of hunters and shepherds. In many things they were barbarians, but not in the art of war: so that what was said by the Roman General of the Gauls and Germans, I think, was applicable equally at least to the Tartars and Scythians: "Those barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline."

The revolution in the affairs of men, that was occasioned by that deluge of barbarians, is mentioned by the Greek and Roman writers only incidentally: but the sources
and

and first migrations of those people lay beyond the northern historic horizon of the antients: which horizon was bounded by the 57th degree of northern latitude. The northern coasts of Europe to the north-east of the Elbe were not at all known: the extensive sea was very little if at all navigated. There was no certainty about the Caspian, which was supposed to be a great bay of the Northern Ocean; as was also the Euxine. The Scythian clans of the Roxolani, dwelling on the north of the vale of Borysthenes, were the most northerly people known to the antients; for, the regions beyond them, although in a parallel more to the south than many parts of Britain which were known to be inhabited, were supposed to be uninhabitable on account of the extreme cold: this was the northern boundary of the geographic knowledge of the antients. All beyond was unknown, and supposed to be a region of inhospitable cold and darkness. The more remote antients, as Homer and Hesiod, in conformity with the popular notions of their times and country,

suppose all those beyond those precincts to be beyond the bounds of the earth; nay, beyond chaos, to be the region of shades, and subterranean. This region, however, they called *Tartarus*, by the name of a people and country that really existed. This unknown land, described as beyond the extreme bounds of the habitable world; and even beneath the earth, was the fabulous habitation of the Cymri; Cimmiari or Cimbri of the early ages, a people known to the antients only in fable.

The Greek and Roman writers then were unable to explore or even to form any plausible conjecture concerning the origin or first courses of those barbarous people: and their migration, and inundation of the countries all around, has been generally considered as a subject of wonder and astonishment rather than an object of philosophical investigation.

In the present age of rational curiosity and enquiry, it may be expected that men of leisure, genius, and learning, will collect all the facts, and the fragments of facts, relating

relating to that deluge of barbarians, that lie scattered amidst the mass of historic ruins, and try to recompose them into some semblance, at least, of their original existence. The philosophical enquirer will not view those hordes upon hordes as dropping from the clouds, like swarms of insects; or, as birds of passage flying through the air. He will be attracted by their capacity of moving, and the means of supporting and enabling them to move in a body. He will not give way to the suggestions of an indolent presumption, that those people were mere savages, or resolve all their movements and operations into mere brutal force. He will immediately perceive military discipline and subordination; a regular system of march and castrametation; and an effective plan for the supply of provisions and warlike stores, with the necessary means of carriage. At the head of those tribes, or hordes, he will find leaders of spirit and vigour of mind sufficient to command the respect and obedience of their ferocious officers and soldiers; and of such military experience and skill, as

well as fortitude and bravery, as to meet in the field the best generals in the civilized world; and finally to conduct their command, through an infinite variety of unforeseen occurrences and emergencies, to the destined point of service.

L E T -

LETTER XI.

*Finnish Nations.—Error of Mr. Buffon.—
Customs and Manners of the Tartar Na-
tions.—Of the Religion of barbarous Na-
tions.—Similarity of Customs between the
Tartars and American Indians.*

St. Petersburg, April 1789.

THE Finnish nations in Europe are those inhabiting Finmark and the provinces bordering upon the gulph of Finland. They are different from the other tribes inhabiting the more northern parts of Europe and Asia, in language and religion. Their manners have a nearer resemblance, as must happen to tribes and nations, whether they be of the same origin or not, dwelling in the same climate, and under the same circumstances. Difference of language is not always, however, a certain proof of a dif-

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ferent origin; nor, on the contrary, is similarity of customs a proof of the same original. "We find in Lapland," says Mr. Buffon*, "and in the northern parts of Tartary, a race of small-sized men, whose figure is uncouth, and whose physiognomy is as wild as their manners are unpolished: though they seem to be of a degenerate species, they are numerous, and the countries they occupy extensive. The Laplanders, the Danes, the Swedes, the Moscovites, the inhabitants of Nova Zembla, the Borandians, the Samoeids, the Ostiaks of the old continent, the Greenlanders, and the savages to the north, to the Esquimeaux Indians of the new continent, appear to be one common race, which has been extended and multiplied along the coasts of the northern seas, and over deserts considered as uninhabitable by every other nation." This hypothesis Mr. Buffon attempts to support by similarity of size and features; but this resemblance is merely ideal. The Russians,

* Histoire Nat.

Swedes,

Swedes, and Danes are as unlike the natives beyond the arctic circle, as the other inhabitants of Europe. They are, in general, tall, well made, and comely, and as different in language and customs as any two people possibly can be, except in one instance; wearing fur cloaks in winter.

The Asiatic tribes inhabiting Siberia and the banks of the Wolga are divided into Fins and Tartars. The latter prevail in number. The Laplanders, with the Greenlanders, Fins, and other tribes upon the Frozen Ocean, were, without doubt, the original inhabitants of Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, and had been driven out by the ancestors of the present possessors; a matter which is confirmed in a certain degree by the traditions of Lapland. The Russians call the first numerical figure Odin, probably in allusion to the first in place and dignity, as this celebrated leader was of the northern hives. The native country of Odin was Scandinavia. As we approach the pole, or enter the distant plains of Tartary, he is less known. In Tartary he was

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only

only chief of a wandering tribe. In Scandinavia he was the Sovereign and God of fixed nations. We find the Laplanders and Tartars in particular having other gods than Odin: they worship the sun, in which, however, they suppose the existence of a divine being. The Asiatic Fins and Tartars offer to this luminary annual sacrifices; in spring, to supplicate a plenteous harvest: and in autumn, or winter, to return thanks for it, they offer the fruits of the earth. The Ostiac Tartars have some simple instruments of music among them, and some simple tunes: they add to these some extemporary songs, and, when inspired with the bottle, extemporary verses. They have pantomime dances: the dancer puts on a mask, and changes his dress, as he would imitate different men, beasts, and birds. In those Tartarian masks it is easy to discover the origin of our masquerades, and our Scythian extraction. These customs are common to many tribes, and in their dances the women affect the most amorous gestures; in which particular there is a resemblance
between

between them and the Russian females, as there is between both and the balladiers, or dancing girls, in India. Their manner of dancing is exactly the same as that of the women of the islands of the Indian Ocean, represented in the plates of Captain Cook's Voyage.

Besides the sun, the Tartars have various inferior deities, presiding over vegetation, over harvest and hunting; and every family too, and every forest, and river, and lake, has its peculiar god. The lower man is sunk in ignorance, the greater is his fear; he multiplies his gods, as a kind of body-guards, against the equal number of evil genii which his fertile imagination creates along with them. He cannot conceive how one deity is able to extend attention and protection to all animate and inanimate substance. Even in our most exalted state of knowledge, it is almost too great a weight for the human mind to conceive the vastness of a power, which of itself created and regulates all things. As our minds enlarge, the fictitious gods are banished; the
lakes,

lakes, the woods, and firm land, and floating seas, are as it were delivered into the hands of one almighty Governor!

In the sacrifice for obtaining plenty of food, the women are permitted to join; but in no other sacrifice. Many tribes, who deny the female title to future existence, imagine it is unnecessary in the ladies to solicit the gods unless for present subsistence. The Tartars open a furrow in the spring with great ceremony; and in this they are imitated by their descendant, the Emperor of China. If the harvest fail, they say it is owing to the Christian part of their countrymen, who offer no sacrifices. They have a grand festival in honour of all the gods, and make their offerings before fires, as at an altar. They throw cold water upon the victim; and if it does not shiver at the seventh ablution, it is deemed an unfortunate omen. The priests, when the victim is dressed, hold up a dish with part of the animal to the gods, and then divide the rest among the votaries, as was also customary both among the Greeks and Romans. Parents,

rents, and age, over all the east, are highly venerated. In the assemblies, in which matters of war and hunting are debated, the old men are first heard. The North American Indians present the most striking pictures of filial love, or rather of filial adoration, in the annual resurrection of their dead relations. The Asiatics do not carry their respect to so awful a degree; yet they transport the bodies of their dead to a vast distance, to be interred near their other relations, if they happen to die in the country of strangers; and they have annual festivals in commemoration of the dead. The Tartars in general are very pious and sincere in their devotions: every one holds a rosary in his hand, by which they mark the number of their ablutions. The priest sits cross-legged upon his heels, facing the congregation; he recites the prayers in a soft and pathetic tone of voice, and the assembly repeat them, or answer Amen to each. The prayers of such tribes as are of the Mahomedan religion are in the Arabic language. When the word *Alla* is pronounced, every
one

one heaves a profound sigh, stops his ears, shuts his eyes, covering his face with his hands, and bending it towards the ground, as if unworthy to hear the sacred name pronounced, or to look up to heaven. The Tartars wish to be interred near the tombs of reputed saints, as well as their relations, carrying their affections and their zeal to the grave. If the weather be hot, and the distance of these sepulchres considerable, the dead body is reduced to a skeleton, which is transported to the destined place; while they bury the other parts where death first arrested them. When a Tartar, in travelling, chances to ride by the tomb of his friend, he enters into conversation with the dead, enquires into his present condition, and, snatching a handful of hair from his horse's mane, deposits it upon the tomb. The Americans resemble the Tartars in every thing regarding veneration for the dead, and funeral obsequies. They place the dead body upon a cloth, presenting it with different viands and fruits, put a pipe into its mouth, and converse with it concerning the accident which occasioned its death. They ask

ask if his wife, or sons, or daughters, had vexed and broken his heart; promising satisfaction upon the delinquents, and to perform annual honours to his manes. The Russians have still remaining among them customs similar to these: and in several other customs of the Scythians, the similarity between their manners and the Americans would seem to confirm the idea of America having been peopled from the north-eastern parts of Asia.

The Tartars formerly, when richer than they are now, used to bury with the dead valuable articles of silver and gold: yet such is their veneration for their ancestors, it is still held, as it always was, the highest sacrilege to plunder the sepulchres. The Russians, less scrupulous, find great treasures in digging the tombs in Siberia and Tartary. This proves the degeneracy of the Tartars more than any thing else: the permitting strangers, I mean, to disturb the shades of their fathers. But their antient spirit no longer exists; and even the Kalmuc will soon begin to put most value on things of this world.

L E T.

LETTER XII.

The different Tartar Tribes.—Marriage Ceremonies.—A Tartar Divorce.—Trial for Adultery in Tartary.—Tartarian Gods and Goddesses.—Funeral Orations.—Anecdotes of the Circassians.—A Tartar Love Song.

St. Petersburg, April 1789.

THE various nations of Tartars are not only jealous of their distinct origins, but of preserving their race pure and unfulled from mixture, unless with the Moguls or Kalmucs, whom they esteem the highest class. There are small villages in Siberia, which contain a whole nation of those unadulterated species, covered with rags and nastiness, and sunk into the lowest degree of ignorance. Sometimes these little nurseries of empires are reduced to ten or

twenty families ; and, no longer able to exist of themselves, they intermarry with the tribes among whom they dwell, if these happen to be of an inferior rank, as none others would admit of such alliances. Hence the language of the reduced tribe, as well as their peculiar manners and customs, in a short time become extinct. The Arinzes, a Tartar tribe inhabiting Siberia, reduced to a small number by war and misfortunes, fled and associated with the Katschinzes, taking wives among them. In the year 1735, when Messrs. Muller and Gmelin visited the Yenisei, there was only one man left who spoke the Arinzian language : Mr. Muller found this person useful in giving him words from his vocabulary, from a language nearly expiring. When Mr. Muller and his fellow-traveller Gmelin visited the same part in the year 1740, the Arinzian was dead ; and the language of his nation, and the nation itself with him !

Whatever disputes may arise about the origin of men, the origin of women affords no grounds for any : it is perfectly distinct :
they

they are all of the same race and family—whether they tread bare-footed the deserts of Tartary, or lead the dance in the gayest Parisian assemblies, they shew themselves to be of the same genuine stock in customs and manners. The Parisian lady pillages every toy-shop to ornament her person : the Tartarian damsel, for the same end, is equally eager in exploring the shores of every lake, every hill, and plain, and wood : in order to set off her charms, she picks up every pebble and shell : they all agree in one pursuit—man. Their language and oratory are the same : the same their eyes—their tears. They allow men to conquer Asia, Africa, Europe, and America ; and, when men have done, they lay hold of the victors.

Wives, among all those northern and eastern nations, are purchased by the men : and so soon as a Tartar female is marriageable, the mother hangs a white sheet upon the outside of the tent, as a signal to bachelors. The parents in Tartary, as well as in Europe, keep to themselves the privilege of making the bargain. The bride, as custom demands,

demands, struggles hard at leaving the family hut : the bridegroom requires assistance in dragging her away ; as it would appear forward and ungrateful, to seem to go willingly from her parents and household gods, and immodestly to rush into the arms of a strange husband. They at least make a shew of

..... innocent, and virgin modesty,

That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won.

MILTON.

The bride is carried to bed by force. Among some tribes, they set her upon a mat, and, taking the corners, carry her into the bed-room, saying to the bridegroom, " Here, wolf, behold thy lamb !" But then comes the ordeal trial : if the bridegroom suspects the virginity of the bride, he returns the wanton to her relations again ; allowing, however, the purchase-money. Among the Ostiaks the custom varies : if the bridegroom be satisfied with his bride, he presents, next morning, a rein-deer to his mother-in-law : but should he not be satisfied, the mother-in-law presents a rein-deer

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to

to the bridegroom ; thereby justly and ingenuously implying, that, the daughter being under the mother's care, the praise or blame of her conduct belongs to her guardian. If a Tartar is determined no longer to bear with the frailties of his wife, he goes up to her, and tears off her cap or veil ; and this, of itself, constitutes a divorce. The Tongusian, when he has detected his wife in criminal connection with other men, challenges the adulterer ; and being armed with large clubs, the challenger first receives several blows from the challenged upon his back ; which is then returned alternately until one or the other is killed, and frequently both. If the adulterer refuses the challenge, he must pay whatever is demanded by the injured husband in cattle and goods.

The Tartars have their gods and goddesses in as great abundance as the Greeks and Romans, with other names, but with the same employments. Their Juno is called Youma Ava, or Mother of the Gods ; her sons are the inferior deities. Pan is christened Vadafch ; and we find him at his old trade

ging, that they preserve the marks of youth longer than those of the common race of Tartars; and to procure such alluring wives, they make incursions into the Kalmuc countries, in order to carry the women off: the haughty Kalmuc would never consent to such marriages. Should a Tartar leave a Kalmuc widow, she displays, in a funeral oration, the heroic tenderness of her husband, who did not purchase her with vile cattle or money, but ventured his life to obtain her. She boasts of his conjugal love, his generosity, his wisdom, his œconomy, and wealth; the number of cattle which he had stolen, and slaves which his valour had procured him. She portrays the noble figure he made upon horseback, in the chase, and in battle.

The Tartars are not remarkable for the chasteness of their character; yet we find examples, even among the Circassians, who make a trade of beauty, of respect to decency. These, when under bondage to the Khan of Crimea, were obliged to furnish his harem with a handsome young virgin annually.

nually. The Khan sent regularly his officers to demand this tribute to lust. It happened that the officers using improper freedoms in examining the girls, were put to death by the enraged fathers and relations. They collected their forces, and cut in pieces the army of the Khan, which was sent against them to revenge the murder of his ministers.

From native poetry and songs the disposition of a people is best determined; and, if we may judge of the amorous complexion of the Tartars from theirs, we shall think very highly of their tender feelings. The following is a female love-song, literally translated from the Kalmuc language; the subject, the absence of a lover.

As ever in the morning the larks exalt their voices,
And I listen to their song,

So my beloved comes incessantly into my mind

Ah my father! excellent at shooting with the bow!

Ah my mother! of so kind a disposition!

Must it then abide only in my thoughts?—

Thoughts are ever deceitful;

Sensual perceptions alone are real.

O my friend! let this be told to you—

The conjunctions of nature are powerful.

L 3

The

The approach of our fate is concealed :
Bliss flies of itself unexpectedly,
And is destroy'd by the vicissitudes of the course of
the world.

Those Tartars who deny the right of women to a future state, at the same time exempt them from all crimes here ; and they are subject to no laws but the restraint of their husbands. Other tribes admit their ladies to accompany them to the other world—where, say they, good men will find their families, their cattle and property of various kinds, in a much better state than in this.

According to their near or remote acquaintance with their Mahomedan brethren, their religion is more or less mixed with its tenets : and sometimes the doctrines of the Lama and of Mahomet are so jumbled among the common race of Tartars, that it is difficult to say what they profess. They call their heaven the land of perfect perfection : their hell is a cold one ; where the poor wretch is doomed to wander, shivering, naked, and forlorn.

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LETTER XIII.

Customs and Manners of the Tartars.—Interesting Anecdote of the Torgot Horde.—Specimens of Tartar Poetry, from the Russian Travellers.—M. Pallas's Account of the Kalmucs.—Anecdotes of the Tongusians, the best of all the Tartar Nations.—Politeness to their Women.

St. Petersburg, May 1789.

THE Scythians, though shepherds, never resembled, in the least, the portraits drawn of Arcadian swains. Their crooks are spears; their mellow pipes are harsh-throated horns; and their hamlets are filled with bows and poisoned arrows. They are butchers rather than shepherds: their flocks are fed for slaughter. Where there is agriculture there is proportionable peace and protection; but

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there

there is not the like security and repose in the pastoral life. However brave they may be, we shall find that nation most averse to war, where agriculture and commerce flourish most. Where there is a fixed and great property, the possessors are not fond of running the chances of war, by which they may lose, but cannot gain.

The Tartars are hospitable to strangers. In their prayers they beg that God would bestow plenty, to enable them to warm and comfort the traveller. When you have once procured their friendship by kind offices, they seldom betray any confidence put in them. To one another they are very kind in misfortune; parting with a share of their wealth to reinstate their countrymen in the condition from which they had fallen. Some writers apologise for their depredations, on the ground that they proceed from a false notion of bravery. When a band of Tartars, or, I shall say, a foraging party, have seized upon a herd of cattle, they make a feast, and what is not needed for present consumption is sent home. As they

they grow weary of the expedition they drop off, without asking leave of any one. Their prisoners they make their slaves; as no Tartar, unless in the utmost necessity, will be a menial servant. The women discover, as every where else, a mild and humane disposition; they are the prisoners' advocate with their fierce husbands, and often connive at their escape at the hazard of their own lives. The Russian government having found the Tartars rather fickle political friends, oblige them to give hostages; and it is common to see, in the streets of Petersburg, a Tartarian Prince who is security for his father's or his brother's subjects. If it be true that the Tartars are abject slaves to their own Princes, whom they almost adore, we are at a loss to reconcile with this their love of freedom. It would seem, they are attached to their old customs, rather than to actual liberty; and when unrestrained in hunting and robbing, they imagine themselves free. Their ardent love of a wandering life is strongly marked by the following occurrence.

The

The Torgots, a Mongolian horde, formerly inhabited the banks of the Wolga. The Tartarian horde to which they belonged, dissolved at the death of their khan, Geldan Zeren, in the year 1746: part submitted to China; part fled to the deserts, to enjoy independence; and the remainder acknowledged Russia for their protector, and pitched their tents near the Wolga. They had frequent disputes with the various hordes already under the Russian government, and were constantly endeavouring to subdue each other. Their dread of falling at last into the power of some of these, or of the Russians, who were under the necessity of interfering, in order to keep their Wolgaic hordes in awe, made them conceive the design of marching back into Soongaria, their native country. Their priests, to accelerate their motions, foretold their bondage to the Russians, who, they pretended, would oblige them to follow agriculture, and furnish recruits for the imperial armies. Trembling at this idea, the whole body moved, in the beginning of the year 1770, towards the plains

plains of Soongaria. The ground was covered with snow, and they had a vast tract of country and many rivers to pass in their journey; the hardships of which, and the attacks they experienced from the numberless Tartar nations in their way, reduced them more than one half before they arrived at their destination. In this state they fell an easy victim to the Chinese, who forced them to apply themselves to husbandry, and dismissed their priests, whose counsels might soon again remove them.

Among those who were detained by the Russians, who pursued them and brought several thousands of them back, we find a piece of poetry, the burthen of which is the flight of their brethren, and their melancholy situation in being divided:

“ As when the heavens, in a night serene,

“ The twinkling stars illuminate the scene,

“ And gild the azure firmament on high,

“ And fling their sparkling glories thro’ the sky—

“ ’Tis silence all! and peace and pleasure reign;

“ No cloud obscures the air, no storm the main.

“ At once a solemn gloom draws o’er our head,

“ Involving earth and heav’n in one dark shade.

“ Such

"Such quick vicissitudes of bliss and woe
"Attend the cursed fates of men below.
"Our friends are fled! We solitary stay
"Where the deserted Wolga finds his way;
"Where, too, the lovely Mazak's orphan stream.
"Ah, is it thus? or do I only dream?
"No, no! they're gone!—At least, bid us adieu!
"And say, With broken hearts we part from you!
"Sad is the journey for your flocks and herds;
"Was it not better what we have preferr'd?
"Or shall we, Heav'n forbid! drag slav'ry's chains,
"While you, in freedom, scour your native plains?
"How lank, how lean will be the gen'rous horse!
"The herds how crippled, with so long a course
"O'er rugged frozen hills and snowy dales!
"Fate bids it so; and fate o'er all prevails.
"Ah! comfort us with hope of your return!
"Must we from household gods be ever torn?
"Must we for household gods and you forever mourn?" }
"The Kalmucs," says M. Pallas, "are
"more active than the other tribes. They
"are a cunning people, but social, and even
"in temper, upon every occasion; friendly
"to their dependents, and faithful to their
"princes; which is remarkable in such
"widely extended plains and in such a va-
"grant people. Were it not owing to their
"attachment to their native manners, they
"would

“ would not keep together. Their tents are
“ of felt, made of the wool of their sheep;
“ and indeed so hairy, it is fit for nothing
“ else, but very fit for this; keeping out the
“ wind and rain, and being very portable.
“ They are carried by camels; which, how-
“ ever, do not thrive well in those regions.
“ A common property among them is ten
“ cows and a bull; or ten mares and a stal-
“ lion: but they number sometimes by hun-
“ dreds and thousands. They use the bulls
“ for beasts of burden, and keep many of
“ them, esteeming one bull as valuable as
“ fifty cows. The lambs of their sheep
“ supply furs for pelisses or great winter
“ cloaks.

“ When a Kalmuc horde intends to re-
“ move in search of fresh pasture, which, in
“ summer, they are under the necessity of
“ doing every four, six, or eight days, peo-
“ ple are, in the first place, sent out to recon-
“ noitre the best spot for pitching the tents
“ of the khan or prince; for the lama or
“ priests; and for the idols. These begin
“ the march, and are followed by the whole
“ troop,

“troop, each choosing what place they think
“best in the cavalcade. The camel that is
“loaded with the most precious furniture,
“is decorated with little bells; the rest
“march in a string, the one behind the
“other. The bulls with the less valuable
“burthens are driven on before. On
“those days, the girls dress themselves in
“their best apparel, not forgetting the art
“of painting, which is common to the Asi-
“atics: they have the charge, together with
“the boys, of leading the cattle; and, on
“the roads, they beguile the tediousness of
“the journey with their songs. Besides
“milk, the Kalmucs are fond of roots.
“They procure tea, though at a high price,
“from Russia, which they mix; or some-
“times substitute wild herbs entirely for
“this bewitching beverage. They can-
“not endure hot rooms, and are very
“healthy.”

The Monguls, or Kalmucs—the Mand-
shours, or Tongusians, are the two most
distinguished tribes of all the Tartar nations.
They both claim their descent from the
conquer-

conquerors of China, and boast of native princes who have sat, or still are seated, upon the Chinese throne. The Kalmucs, the nation of Tzingis Khan, were driven out of China A. D. 1368. They revenged their disgrace upon the other Tartars, and deluged their native plains with blood in search of new settlements. They have now little to distinguish them but their name. The Mandshours, more fortunate, were called in by the Chinese during a civil war; and the wooden horse, once admitted within the walls, has kept its station. The Kalmuc Monguls inhabit the countries situated upon the Wolga. The Mandshours, at the other end of the earth, pitch their tents upon the banks of the Amur, and coasts of the northern and eastern ocean. The Kalmucs, tired with unsuccessful struggles, submitted to the protection of Russia; and the tattered remnants of Tzingis Khan's host craved leave to rest under the wing of the Imperial eagle. The Tongusians bravely defended themselves against the first Russians who ventured to attack them in their native

9 country;

country; but they were at last vanquished by the superior discipline of their invaders. Though vanquished, their spirit was the same, and breathing still independence. They revolted when an opportunity offered, and murdered the Russian tax-gatherers. It was not until the year 1657 that Russia had obtained the peaceable government of a part of this generous tribe. The Kalmucs are chiefly distinguished from the common race of Tartars, by their form of government, which is monarchical. Their attachment to their princes keeps up some order among them, and discipline. The other hordes choose among themselves chiefs, according to their ideas of their abilities, paying, at the same time, due attention to the wealth of those elected.

The Kalmuc dress nearly resembles the Chinese; no doubt from their long residence among that people. The country of the Kalmucs is most favourable to agriculture, being of a good soil and climate, and not incumbered with woods: yet, the breeding of cattle is their favourite employment,

ment, as it is attended with less manual labour, which they abominate, as derogatory to their high descent, rather than from any aversion to eat the produce of the lands, for they purchase meal and other articles from the Russians. The Kalmucs I have seen at Petersburg are of a middling size; and it instantly strikes you upon sight, that you had seen them before. Any person the least conversant with the history of China, and who has seen the plates in the histories of that country, will be at no loss to know a Kalmuc wherever he meets him. Their head and face are broad and round, and they have small eyes and noses, with swarthy complexions. Their head is shaved, all but a small lock at the top; and they wear a bell-fashioned cap. The Tartar visage runs through the whole. They have learnt, at Petersburg, to get into chaises, where they cut a droll figure, when contrasted with the powdered courtier in his *vis-à-vis*. They have not learnt how many are proper to sit in a chaise at a time, and pack together in crowds, resembling a ring of bells. They

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are said not to be the most cleanly in their persons: their idle way of life easily accounts for this. The Tartars who profess Mahomedanism, have at least changed so far for the better, in learning to wash themselves. They are a lively, and seem naturally an ingenious people; but their lazy habits and vagrant life have naturally given them all the attendant vices. There are few instances of murder among the Kalmucs, which, as they are exceedingly irritable and revengeful, is attributed to their belief in ghosts. Murder among the Tartars is punished with death, and that inflicted by the hands of the deceased's relations. If, however, they cannot find the culprit, and their anger abates, they frequently accept a compensation in money or cattle.

The Mônguls have some relicts among them of their antient pre-eminence. They have schools for teaching their children not only the common parts of education, but likewise geography, history, astronomy, medicine, and theology: and they have written
books

books of laws. Their code is very favourable to women, who are considered by them as incapable of any crime. Most of the Asiatics esteem the female sex in no other light than as mere instruments of pleasure, and as a kind of human dolls for men to play withal. Even those Tartars who permit their ladies to accompany them to the other world, mean it only for their own pleasure. They do not bring them before Rhadamanthus: their women, like their cattle, are only a part of their equipage on the journey.

The domestic animals of the Kalmucs are camels, horses, cows, sheep, and goats; they have neither swine nor poultry: their horses, besides the purpose of riding, serve them in all respects as cows: they are fond of mare's milk. Horse's flesh is a delicacy with them; so that upon any expedition they are in no danger of wanting food; as every Tartar leads one or two spare horses: they need not waggons to convey their provisions; they contrive to make their provisions carry themselves.

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The fleetness of their horses, in their frequent marches, gives them the preference to all other animals, with those hordes: a man of quality is therefore known by his numerous stud; in some instances, as some will have it, to the number of four thousand.

The camels are used for heavy burthens; and the great men likewise ride upon them in ordinary journeys, or when the tribes are removing to a new spot of land.

The women manage the œconomy within doors: the men look to every thing else. The exercises of the Kalmucs are manly, and consist in shooting with the bow, and wrestling. They are fond too of singing, but the performance is with the females. In addition to the specimens of their songs already given, take the following: the subject is a lamentation for a dying lover.

THE MAID.

Thy reddish bay horse
Falls languishingly on the banks of the river Sall!
Thou fallest, courageous youth! thou that art mine;
To thee the moon will be a stedfast companion.

THE

THE DYING YOUTH.

The eagle's feather, that is stuck in my hair,
Take from me, and carry it to my friends:

Ah! when you deliver it, so do it, that their tender
hearts

Be not smitten with anguish at hearing the doleful news:
And let them the golden lettered Schodba *
Order to be read for twelve long years for me.

The subjects of their songs are, in general,
the fabulous stories of gigantic chivalry,
heroic tales, and amorous ditties. Their
musical instruments are, the lute, the violin,
and the pipe; they likewise amuse them-
selves with playing at chess and cards.

Funeral ceremonies are strictly observed
by all the Tartars. The most honourable
manner of reducing the body to dust, ac-
cording to the notion of the Kalmucs, is
that of burning. They have an idea too,
that such purification by fire procures ad-
mission for the soul directly into paradise.

The Tongusians are partly under the
government of China, and partly under
that of Russia. Their character is a me-

* Schodba is a sort of mass for the dead, written in
letters of gold.

dium betwixt the proud ostentatious Kalmuc and the common tribes addicted to pilfering and other low vices. The Tongusian nation is divided into two classes—the shepherds and the huntsmen. Their rugged country affords good opportunity for the chase, and plenty of game to induce them to make hunting a business. The Kalmuc country is flat, and without wood; the Kalmucs, therefore, hunt but for amusement, and that seldom. The Tongusian huntsman considers the shepherd's life as effeminate, and unworthy of men; he strings his bow, hangs his quiver at his back, and climbs the mountain's side, smiling at the folly of his less active countrymen, in depriving themselves of that health and vigour which the pursuit of the wolf and the bear gives to him. Few of the Tartar or northern nations are now distinguished for their hardy manner of life.

The Tongusian huntsman prides himself upon his sobriety, as well as upon his athletic exercises. He calls the shepherd luxurious, who indulges in drinking a spirit
2 drawn

drawn from four milk. The shepherds are more wealthy than the huntsmen, and more at ease. Ease and wealth have ever occasioned luxury, and herewe see it in its infancy. The shepherds do not expose themselves to cold like the huntsmen; but the huntsmen are warmer by exercise, than the others even with the aid of brandy; brandy, which is as dangerous a substitute for warmth or exercise, as opium for rest. Scurvy, the common disease of northern climates, is not known among the Tongusian huntsmen, until old age prevents them from undergoing their usual fatigue: even their want of cleanliness does not bring this calamity, until their bodies and their minds are no longer kept in motion. Scurvy is the constant attendant of laziness and dirtiness; and wherever it is found, the other two qualities are not far removed.

The Tongusian huntsman, while he presents the finest character to be found in Tartary, is an evidence against the imposition of those excuses that are made for drunkenness: he retains health and strength

of body to the latest period of his existence: they detest every thing mean or dishonourable; are as jealous of any reflection upon their good name as the most polite nations; and, like them, decide all disputes of this nature by duel—shooting the one at the other with arrows. They formerly fought in presence of the elders; but now the Russian government has forbidden such encounters, and the men of honour retire to settle their disputes in other countries. Their noble families, too, are as high-mettled as any in Europe: the brothers are guardians of their sister's reputation; and should a lady of birth be imprudent, the lover must marry her, if of equal rank; if not, her brother shoots him without farther ceremony.

The women are treated with the greatest respect and tenderness; and, in return, they are the most affectionate wives; so that, at the death of their husbands, they are not to be prevented without difficulty from killing themselves. The young women make a present to their intended husbands of a dress,

as

as a specimen of their sewing. The women are the musical performers upon all occasions. The Russian males contend in this art with the females; but as the Russians are a brave people, we cannot conclude that music is an effeminate amusement. Nature would seem to have hesitated, whether to make the Russians a nation of warriors, or nightingales; and, in hesitating, made them both.

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LETTER XIV.

*The Russian Amusements upon May-Day.—
The Approach of Summer.*

Ingria, May 1789.

IN this country of Scythia, I imagine myself a thousand years old, and nearly related to Odin. I consider you as one of my posterity, and myself as writing to you from my tomb in the Desert of Tartary. I feel a crust of antiquity gathering round me; the wild scene of woods and uncultivated tracts presented to the view, keeps up the dream of ancient times. When I cast my eye towards Petersburg, the vision in part dissolves; but, as the country of witches is in the neighbourhood, a little farther stretch of imagination can make this emporium appear the effect of enchantment. It is with difficulty I can reconcile myself, after wandering

dering through Tartary, and stirring up the ashes of gods and heroes, to recur to the common tales of travellers, and to inform you what the Russians are now about.

This is May-day, and all the world are assembled at Catharineburg, and hailing with joy the return of summer, after a winter of six months. The earth, lately buried in snow, appears as rising from the dead; the white covering, or winding-sheet, is lying around in fragments; upon one hand I hear the singing of birds, upon the other the rending of the ice. The Gulph of Finland, upon whose shore Catharineburg is situated, is still a frozen field. The Russians are merry in the woods surrounding Catharineburg—drinking, singing, and smoking, in tents erected for this particular day. Every chaise and single horse chair is parading the streets of Catharineburg. I regret much that the Russians have no other place more proper than this, for celebrating so joyous an anniversary: yet the empire is not limited by such narrow boundaries—the adjacent country not so fertile or cultivated, as to forbid

bid the appropriation of a more extensive and elegant place of public resort. I detest extravagance in private works—I detest æconomy in public ones.

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LETTER XV.

Russian Summer.—Anecdotes of Prince Nassau—of Paul Jones—Princess Dascbkoff—Count Besborodko.—Russian Dances.—Russian Amusements in Summer.

Ingriz, June 1789.

I HAVE retired from the bustle of the metropolis to the country. My hut is in the neighbourhood of the Russian and Finland villages—each rural sight, each rural sound. I go out every morning to fish in the river which runs through the woods; and I seldom dine without having a dish of my own providing at table: so much for industry. The Russian girls, who are gathering berries in the forests, entertain me with their songs; and in return I purchase their collection of wild fruits.

Winter has hardly disappeared, when all the earth is dressed in her finest liveries: the fir-tree alone retains his garb at all seasons, and keeps his shaggy coat in the cold weather, in common with the bear and wolf who dwell under his branches. The quick transition of the season is most distinguishable in the birch forests: not many days ago they were naked and shivering; they are now new clothed in light green, and make a beautiful contrast with the dark hue of the pine. Earth's verdant carpet is spread over every plain. There is neither hill, nor mountain, nor rock, nor cataract, to bring into my description of the Russian spring. The last winter was uncommonly severe, and it is succeeded by a summer extremely hot. The sun-beams are most unsufferable: I plunge into the river to cool myself; but the Russians do not follow my example, until they have parboiled their bodies in the vapour bath. This climate is a trying one for any constitution: the Russians make it worse by their ridiculous practices. The field of ice upon the Gulph only broke up
a few

a few days ago, notwithstanding the great heat from the middle of April last. The farmer was ploughing and sowing, in his shirt, upon land, while winter still bound the ocean in his sight.

A new scene opens: the sea is covered with ships: I hear the thunder of the Russian fleet at Cronstadt, whose harbour appears a wood of masts. The village where I reside in the country is situated about halfway between Petersburg and Cronstadt, and near the shore of the Gulph. I view the vessels hourly passing and repassing, laden with the rich produce of the empire, or carrying to the capital the luxuries of other nations. No traveller, either going from or coming into Russia, can pass me unobserved. I was here for a few days in April last, when Prince Nassau arrived to take command of the galley fleet. He is a fine looking man, and has already approved himself, at least, a brave officer. The instant of his arrival he sent his servant to the post-master, to enquire if the report was true of Admiral Paul Jones being dismissed
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the Russian service. The Prince does not admire his late colleague in the Black Sea expedition: indeed, the newly created Admiral is universally despised, and must, of course, soon retire. I had the honour of seeing this hero lately: he dined at the post-house with his doxy, upon a trip of pleasure from Petersburg. He has nothing remarkable in his figure: I should not have noticed him, had he not been pointed out to me. He did not know that the post-house and tavern was kept by an Englishman. The Admiral ordered his dinner in bad French; he was answered in English, and he started backwards: "What," said he to the master of the house, "you are an Englishman! How did you know that I was of that country?"

Prince Nassau has a something about him which immediately interests you. It is not necessary to be informed that he is a man of distinction. The Prince neglected to give his passport to the post-master. The post-master desired the Prince's servant to ask it from him, as he could not order horses

horses for his carriage, however satisfied he was of his identity, and errand to Russia, until he saw a regular passport for his entry. The servant replied, "That he had asked the Prince for it once, and that his master would of himself deliver the passport without being again put in mind of it; which he would not again venture to do, unless he wished to have his head broken!"

We expect soon to hear of an engagement—the Russian galley fleet with that of Sweden. The weather continues very hot. A captain of a British East India ship, who is just now travelling here, says, "That he never felt himself more incommoded with heat at Bengal, than he now does at Peterburg." It is even dangerous for strangers to walk at mid-day, so powerful are the sun's rays: the very woods have taken fire in some parts of Ingria. There has been no rain for several weeks: the grass fields are burnt up, and the grain is ripening upon straw not one foot in length. The river in which I fish, I am afraid, will be

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dried up. In the evening at sun-set, vast swarms of gnats, or musquitoes, arise from the top of the forest, darkening the air. It is a proof of the extreme heat, when these insects, hatched in the sun-beams, dare not to venture out sooner: they come at this late hour to sip the dew, which then ascends from the earth in a white mist.

I go out in the morning at three and four o'clock to fish or to bathe: I am driven in again at six by the sultry skies: I seek the shade, and exclaim with Virgil,

—O quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

This poet has given us a picture of a Scythian winter, but he forgot the Scythian summer. I put on my trowsers, and take my walk in the evening, in defiance of myriads of gnats. And I wander near the monastery of St. Sergius by the sea-shore, while the last knell warns the monks to prayers and rest: the nightingale serenades me with his song: perhaps a drunken Russian, reeling along the road, disturbs the sweet Syren with his bellowing noise. The
bird

bird renews his note when the Hottentot has passed. A fine finger, or a fine orator, never presses you to hear them, and they only oblige you, if you attend in respectful silence.

I have my concert of vocal and instrumental music, at the post-house, every Sunday. A Russian has made for himself a kind of harp; and his wife, Daphne, plays a little upon the guitar: but this guitar is cracked on the back, and most part of the music makes its escape the wrong way: however, the lady compensates for this, by the excellence of her voice; such as you have heard chanting the Babes of the Wood, or Chevy Chase. We had lately an assembly; two Finland girls performed a Russian dance, and trotted about to the great entertainment of the bearded spectators. All the Russian dances are a kind of pantomime. The dancers are more studious of the management of their eyes and hips than of their feet—they endeavour to convey the most wanton ideas. One of the girls acted the man's part, and threw very amorous glances

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upon

upon *his* mistress; who, in her turn, blushed and languished. The Cossac dance was rehearsed by the house lackey and the parson's son of the parish: this is a challenge dance; the one strives to exceed the other in the execution of a variety of steps and leaps, which they perform alternately. The dancers, in all these dances, while they perform their different attitudes and steps, make the figure of a circle.

A few days ago, as I was attending the concert, Madam Shirbinin, daughter of the Princess Daschkoff, entered the room, with several ladies and gentlemen. Madam Shirbinin speaks English very well—she has formerly been in England. This Princess would go a-fishing: I gave her my rod and lines. She was returning from Cronstadt; where she had been to take farewell of her husband, who is gone with the galley fleet. Monsieur Shirbinin is a brigadier-general in the army. Several regiments have embarked with Prince Nassau. His Excellency Count Belborodko, Prime Minister of Russia; with Prince Kourakin, and

and other princes and nobles of the empire in company, dined here. The Count has raised himself to this eminent station by real merit and ability; which are the only recommendations to Catharine II.

We are daily visited from Petersburg by the first ranks. I cannot get into or out of my room, without brushing against her Imperial Majesty's Orders of St. George and St. Andrew; and have sometimes the honour of playing at billiards with a Knez. The roads are crowded with the summer carriages of the gentry, called troskys: they are of a more elegant construction than those used by the common people. A double row of seats is placed lengthways upon a low carriage with four wheels: over this is placed a canopy of silk or other stuff, with curtains to draw occasionally, at the sides and at the ends, in case of rain or dust. This sort of carriage is very convenient and light: it is easily drawn by two; but the Russian gentry are fond of splendour, and they have generally four or six horses to their carriages, with a corresponding num-

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ber of livery-men. The company sit in two rows, and with their backs to those upon the opposite side ; but when there is room, the Russian and German beauties recline themselves in soft attitudes along the seats. They are fond of displaying their charms in the open air : the present dry season collects the dust around them—they look like angels in the clouds.

The country houses of the nobility are placed close upon the public road : their noble inhabitants entertain themselves in tents erected under the trees, if there be any adjoining : here they drink their coffee, and the ladies employ their hours in needle-work or other amusements. I observed female Turks attending upon these companies, and likewise riding with their new mistresses in their carriages. The Russian ladies treat them with great tenderness, and seem very fond of the daughters of Ocza-kow. Their gardens are in better taste than their houses : and, notwithstanding the dead flatness of the land, nature is copied with much exactness. The nobility invite
the

the public in summer to their gardens, where they are entertained with music, sailing in boats upon the artificial lakes, fire-works, &c. in a magnificent manner. I was last Sunday in the gardens of his Excellency M. Narischin. There was an assemblage of the first rank, as well as of the lower orders, who gain admittance if decently clean in their apparel. The musicians were disposed in a grove of trees: the music had a fine effect, and seemed to ascend from the earth. It adds nothing to the pleasure derived from sounds, to view the distorted features of the performers. An orchestra should have a curtain drawn before it: the sight of bag wigs, powdered tops, and crooked noses, adds nothing to the pleasure which we derive from music. If the performers must appear, let them be dressed somewhat more like the disciples of Apollo. I cannot behold with any temper Handel taking snuff, screwing his pins, or rosinning his fiddle-stick: it gives the idea of a manufacture of music, as well as of tobacco. These observations are not applicable to vo-

cal performers: a finger is an orator of harmony; and a good figure and gesture are requisite in an orator. Any one who has seen and heard a beautiful woman sing, will confess that the sight gives new pleasure to the hearing.

Amidst the sports of dance and song, I forget the bloody field of war—and I wish to forget it. The Russians are following up their victories over the Turks, with heavier and heavier blows. The unfortunate war with Sweden is prosecuted with unequal success on both sides. The grand fleet and galley fleet are both at sea, and we expect daily important intelligence. I will not entertain you with the vague accounts I may receive of battles and sieges: have patience until I can with certainty give you a true and connected narrative.

LET.

LETTER XVI.

Character of Peter the Great.—Russian Nobility.—Reflections on Modern Luxury as it regards Commerce and Arts.—Picture of modern Russia.

Ingria, July 1789.

I TAKE my morning walk in the gardens of the palace of Strelina Myfa, now in ruins. Peter began this palace, and his daughter the Empress Elizabeth continued the building, but died before it was finished. While I sit upon a broken column, a thousand thoughts rush into my mind. Peter meant to adorn the dreary shores of the Finland Gulph leading to his capital, with imperial mansions. The palaces of Oranienbaum, Peterhoff, and Strelina are evidently a part of this plan. The appearance of the opposite shore of Carelia, destitute of such

such ornaments, sets off those improvements in the light of contrast. I can trace, upon the banks of the river where I fish, the outlines of gardens. Wherever I see a straight avenue, I know that Peter has been there, and has cut some of the trees, formerly growing where I now walk, with his own hand. You may easily imagine that I feel myself a foot higher, in walking in a path which has been cleared for me by the hand of an Emperor! I am attached to Russia and to Russians—not from any superior excellence in the natives—they are loaded with vices as much as any of their brothers of Europe—but because they are the children of Peter I. As a proof of my friendship for them, I will tell them freely of their faults. Peter did every thing with the axe and the sword—they were his only instruments in war and in peace: he fixed himself upon the throne with them; he conquered the finest provinces of Sweden; he built and peopled his metropolis; he built and manned his navy; he established an academy of sciences with those tools, by seizing the

the library at Mittau—all this as a warrior and legislator. We wish we had not to add, that, unlike a father, he corrected his own children with them. In the academy there is a figure of Peter in wax: it would have been more characteristic in iron. There is, in the same collection, a bar of iron forged by his Majesty's own hand. This is a better remembrancer of him:—yes, Peter! you manufactured other articles in the iron branch: racks, wheels, and impaling hooks, with stains upon them that time will not efface.

No am'rous hero ever gave thee birth,
Or ever tender goddess brought thee forth:
Some rugged rock's hard entrails gave you form,
And raging seas produc'd you in a storm:
A birth well suiting thy tempestuous kind,
So rough thy manners——

You see I can rail at my favourite prince:
great actions should not make us forget the
cause of humanity; and however necessary
his severities might be, yet they were too
inhuman a sacrifice, even to procure the re-
formation

reformation of his people; which perhaps time might have accomplished without so high a price of blood.

Peter I. was anxious to make his native kingdom a great nation: he was rendered miserable by their opposition to his plans, their cabals and conspiracies against him; and in fits of despair, or rather of madness, he did things unbecoming his character. The works of this Prince were of a solid and lasting nature. If he oppressed his subjects, it was but for a time, and his object was, to bring them in the end peace and ease. The event would soon prove the sterling value of his plans, did the nobles and gentry attend to the improvement of agriculture, and cease to copy the extravagant follies of the rest of Europe; at least until their country be in the same state of improvement. The revenues of the Russian nobles and gentlemen as they now are, could support all their ancient grandeur: but were their incomes ten times greater than at present, they would not answer the demands of modern extravagance. The ancient robes,
covered

covered with gold and silver, were but one expence to a family for generations: they were delivered from the father to the son with the estate. An heir of these days would laugh at his father for such a legacy. The monster fashion, created for a scourge to mankind, has occasioned almost every evil that infects the age: inconstancy in dress and diet has, besides the daily and weekly renewing of expence, fostered the same inconstancy in our minds and actions. If the common people of Russia would only part with their beards, I should be happy to find them persisting in their simplicity of dress: nor have I much objection to the beard, if it were not an enemy to cleanliness. It is not so much Russia that requires sumptuary laws; all classes in other European nations are plunged in misery by modern expences, which lay them open to conduct unworthy of men. Were the legislators of Europe to make sumptuary laws, and enforce obedience to them, a greater reform would ensue than from any other laws whatever. Gustavus III. of Sweden has shewn the worthy

worthy example: and his kingdoms will derive more advantage from those sumptuary laws, than from any war he can ever enter into.

Commercial nations will urge, that the consumption of the various articles of fashion employs a number of people: that changeability of fashion, and love of distinction in society, is the nurse of arts, commerce, and all the improvements of life: this is so far true—and the nursery too of improvements in modern crimes and vices. If extravagance and fashion nourish crimes while they nourish commerce—if an equal number of people are rendered miserable, to those who are employed and maintained by them, might it not be prudent to check what is allowed, even by the advocates of fashion, to be the origin of these evils? Might it not be prudent to look around us, and endeavour to find out some less dangerous supports for commerce, and for the people?

When agriculture has increased and arrived at such perfection, that nothing more can be expected from it in regard to commerce;

merce; and when there are people whom agriculture and its productions cannot employ in useful and elegant manufactures; then, and then only, it might be proper to employ the people in manufactures of any kind which tend to this purpose: but, until this period arrives, it is surely wrong to augment our commerce by luxury and vice, which at least should only be our last resource. Let us first try how far commerce can be augmented and supported by industry, which does not depend upon vice, before we adopt vices and luxury as the sole pillars of the industry and prosperity of mankind. Commerce should certainly be looked upon as in its zenith, when all the people are fully employed and comfortably provided for: those advocates for commerce who do not stop here, will stop no where. China holds up an illustrious picture, how far agriculture, and the productions of agriculture, are capable of employing myriads of people, independent of foreign commerce. Let us improve upon this plan and example, and reject only such articles of foreign commerce

as do not employ our own manufacturers: or let commerce and manufactures remain entirely free, and the vices and extravagances of the wealthy have full play as usual. I shall only propose one sumptuary law to prevent the private vices of the rich from infecting the public, by at first recommending, and gradually enforcing a *national dress*. I esteem dress the principal origin of luxury and vice. The higher ranks only can indulge in various other expences, but every class is ruined by the little ambition for dress—in every person's eye, and more or less in every person's reach. A national dress would soon be followed by numberless benefits. Many of the lower, and nearly all of the middling classes of the people would save one-fourth part of their present incomes: their families would be better maintained and more independent: fewer crimes would be committed. It is not so much against great crimes or expences we have to guard; mankind naturally of themselves shrink at both. There is an oeconomy as well as innocence in nature. It is against those

those deluding, easy steps that lead to luxury, to crimes, and ruin, that our attention ought to be directed. It is not so much against those vices and luxuries which men commit and indulge in private, as against those public follies that draw them imperceptibly to private excesses.

Our commerce will equally flourish, notwithstanding this sumptuary law, or at *worst* be only lopped of some rotten, though gilded branches. Let our merchants and manufacturers import and export whatever they can find sale for; and if they do not find sale at last for ingenious useless commodities, they will be under the necessity of getting rich in a more reasonable manner. Increased agriculture will increase population, which will find additional, though perhaps not new, employment to our merchants and manufacturers.

With respect to the fine arts, this sumptuary law can in no way prevent their increasing perfection; but on the contrary. I can neither agree, that private vices are public benefits, or that fashion is the source

of rational improvement, since daily example shews us, that taste, as well as virtue, is frequently excluded by fashion. While the higher ranks of the nation exhaust their fortunes for the benefit of many; that many becoming rich, become vicious likewise by the example of their employers. I will ask, what arts have been improved by fashion? Not architecture, nor painting, nor sculpture, nor history, nor poetry; because the professors of those arts are the most celebrated, who form themselves on the model of the antients, assisted by native taste and genius. The arts which have improved under the patronage of fashion, are, embroidering patterns for drefs; the method of manufacturing cloth so as to starve the wearers; hair powder, pomatums, washes, and innumerable other articles, which, no doubt, give employment to numbers. The manufactures of necessary articles might nearly employ an equal number of people, seeing that many unnecessary manufactures are often substituted for the others. The remainder would find abundant

abundant employment in the cultivation of waste lands, which are very extensive even in the island of Britain. But as numbers have learned to lean upon our vices for a subsistence, no rapid change is recommended; let the people be gradually taught to lean upon our virtues.

Fashion diverts the channel of wealth to the nurture of every frivolous art, and from the fruits of real industry and elegance. The professors of the elegant arts find them the least lucrative.

The enthusiasm ever attendant on genius keeps them in existence, not the powerful patronage they experience. The wealth of individuals is devoted to riot and folly; the wealth of nations exhausted by their princes, in schemes of wild ambition. Genius and arts find no encouragement, unless they prostitute themselves to please and flatter a vitiated race: and that they are now finding increased encouragement, is, I am afraid, no proof of their improvement, of the taste of the age, or of the benefits derived from luxury or fashion.

Modern nations have examples from the histories of remote ages, and of mighty empires, what sort of benefits were derived from private vices! Private vices multiplied by contagious example: all became vicious and effeminate, and their empires tumbled in ruins. From those ruins, not only our architects and painters are taught, but the prince and the philosopher.

I consider Russia as an immense landscape, in the fore-ground of which appear the statue of Peter the Great, and the living figure of Catharine II. Immediately around is that small assembly of the nation, which their joint efforts have brought forwards into life, and to civilization. I am offended at their gaudy shew and decorations; they form a contrast degrading to that multitude of peasantry which I see behind them, among the woods, and upon the plains, clothed in the coarsest skins of beasts, ignorant of arts and sciences. Do the higher ranks wish to invite the mob to come forward, by that glitter of gold and silver upon their vestments, the elegance of their carriages, and their

their superb palaces? Do they wish the boors to quit the vices of ignorance, and adopt the vices of luxury in their place? Would it not be as well, if their Lords would shew them an example of industry and œconomy; and at first, by training a few peasants upon their several estates, as farmers, spread the ardour for useful knowledge? It might be time enough too, when their revenues are increased by industry, to reap the fruits of it: and the fruits of industry are simple elegance; not vicious ease, nor the indulgence of vicious passions. Peter taught only the more vulgar, but more useful arts to a nation in the first stage of society. It is not the best way to obtain a hearing of the great, to tell them of their faults; yet, if I had an opportunity of speaking to her Imperial Majesty, I would demonstrate the ill consequences of luxurious habits; and that it will require a longer struggle to bring back the Nobility, than it will to bring forward the rest of her subjects to the state they ought to be in. The task of Peter I. was easy, in comparison with what any attempts of the kings of many European nations

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tions would be, to prevail with the higher ranks of the people to relinquish their effeminacy. To reform barbarians, is only to work in paste rather hard; but to reform luxury, is to cure a leper. While Catharine II. is the patron of every solid improvement in arts, agriculture, and commerce, empty show and idle magnificence are not checked.

I know, that not a little of what I have asserted in this letter will be controverted by the friends of luxury and refinement. I admit that it is luxury, or a love of pleasure and distinction, that is the grand incitement to all industry: but, at the same time that our knowledge and our powers are increased by various exertions, our wants and desires are increased also; and, unfortunately, our powers of restraint and supply do not advance in the same proportion: we may grow richer and wiser without being happier.

LET.

LETTER XVII.

The Arrival of a Russian Regiment from Oczakow at Petersburg, under the Command of an English Officer.—Anecdotes of one of the Grand Dukes—of Princess Nassau—of Captain Bentinck, of the British Navy—of a Portuguese Colonel—of Lord Wycombe, Mr. Howard, and Mr. Whitworth.

Ingria, May 1789.

AT two o'clock this morning, while still silence reigned, or was disturbed only by the rustling of the leaves of trees, my ears were suddenly struck with martial music. As the public way leads by the river, on the banks of which I strayed with my fishing-rod, I soon perceived a regiment of soldiers upon their march to the capital. It has come from Oczakow, and is com-

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manded

manded by an Englishman. I left off work, and marched along with them, making enquiries of the officers of their adventures in the land of Mahomet. This regiment had suffered much in the attack of that city: it consists of a very fine body of men: they were all dressed in white jackets and trowsers of linen, for the convenience of marching in sultry weather. Colonel Fanshaw arrived, some days since, with his family: his little son, a boy not exceeding ten years of age, has already bled in the field of Mars: he was wounded in the siege of Oczakow; at an earlier period than when Alexander mounted first his war horse, or Charles XII. of Sweden had heard the glorious whistle of a cannon ball.

This young hero has been nursed at the mouth of a cannon: his father takes him with him in all his expeditions. The eagle teaches her brood to fly in the face of the sun, to accustom their eyes to bear its fiercest beams.

At the post-house people of every nation arrive daily. I mix with the crowd to gain

gain intelligence. Three smart French wenches came lately from Cronstadt, attended by their gallant, Monsieur le Capitaine de Flotte: one of them came close up to me, singing very prettily. "Monsieur," said she, "is there no chaise to be had?" "No, Madam," replied I, "there is no other sort than what you see in the yard; travellers in this country generally make use of such." They were small waggons filled with straw: there was no help for it. "Mon Dieu!" said the girl, and directly jumped into the vehicle, reclining her handsome person among the litter. So the three French filles de chambre and Monsieur le Capitaine, packed into two straw baskets, made their triumphal entry into Petersburg. With what good grace and good nature do these French accommodate themselves to every circumstance of life, while we sulky Britons growl at froward fortune, and are awkward in all our motions! Foreigners smile when they see a plain honest Englishman make a bow in a wrong place, or more commonly at his not making a bow at all.

We

We never yet could acquit ourselves at the foot and hat exercise.

One of the Grand Dukes, a youth about nine years of age, seeing a naval officer passing through some of the apartments of the palace, asked who it was?—His Highness being told it was an English officer of the Russian fleet, and a brother to a lady who has the care of the young Princesses, went to the lady to enquire about her brother. "This was your brother," said the Prince, "and an Englishman? Is he a real, genuine Briton? Does he appear frightened when he enters a room where there is any company? Is he at a loss where to put his hat, when he is so polite as to take it off?" The lady assured his Highness, "that her brother was in every respect an Englishman."

The Princess Nassau has arrived at Peterburg. The young Princess arrived soon after, and lodged at the post-house for one night. She is a beautiful young creature. When she arrived at the house, she ordered, as is usual for travellers of rank

rank when they stop, her bed from the carriage: it was spread upon the floor of the parlour, and the Princess, fatigued with her long journey, lay down to repose at two o'clock in the afternoon. The windows of the parlour had no curtains nor shutters; so, when I imagined the lady would be asleep, I repaired to the window, and, taking my pencil, attempted to take her likeness. Prince Nassau has already gained an important victory over the Swedish galleys. The good fortune of this hero, under the Russian banner, continues. Intelligence of this victory is just arrived, but I am not yet informed of the particulars.

Two captains of the British navy entered my room last night, in search of a bed. They had come from Revel, where they had arrived from Denmark in a small open boat, and visited the Swedish and Russian navy in their passage. This is making very little of the dangerous navigation of the Baltic, notwithstanding this is the finest season of the year. The Baltic is
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however liable to storms at all seasons, and these gentlemen encountered one, which had nearly put an end to their voyage. Captain Bentinck is the name of one of the gentlemen : I forget the name of the other. A Portuguese Colonel is arrived here likewise from Revel and Stockholm. The Colonel informed me that he had made application to his Swedish Majesty for permission to go by the way of Swedish Finland, the seat of war : but this was refused, lest some accident should befall him in a journey through two hostile armies. He is a gentleman, I understand, of great property in the island of Madeira. At the expiration of his travels he marries the young daughter of the Chevalier de Pinto, late ambassador to the Court of London from Portugal, and now prime minister of that kingdom. The Colonel speaks English very well : he informed me that he had resided in London some years ; and he spoke in raptures of our nation, making comparisons between it and the countries through which he had travelled. " But
" money,"

"money," said the Colonel, "is more necessary in England than in other parts :
"it is true, one obtains for their cash every
"luxury and conveniency, which cannot
"be had in other countries, in the same
"style, even for money."

Lord Wycombe, accompanied by Captain Markham, had passed for the Russian metropolis. Russia begins now to make a part of the grand tour, and not the least curious or useful part of it. Mr. Howard is arrived at Petersburg upon a tour of a different kind from every other ; to pour oil and honey into the wounds of the unfortunate. His Excellency Mr. Whitworth and his Secretary Mr. Frazer were here to-day, and played together at billiards. Mr. Whitworth resides within two miles of the post-house, at the country palace of Count Soltikoff, which he has for himself and suite during the summer.

Our Ambassador is much and deservedly respected, notwithstanding the unaccountable breach between the two Courts of London and Petersburg. I call it unaccountable,

countable, because in general two Courts that have been long in the habits of intercourse and friendship, do not in ordinary fall out where there is no opposition of interest ; much less when peace and friendship are the interest of both parties.

LET-

LETTER XVIII.

*Summer Amusements in the Metropolis.—
The Imperial Family.—The Public enter-
tained at Count Strogonoff's Gardens.*

St. Petersburg, August 1789.

FROM my retirement amidst woods and lakes, I have after an absence of three months returned to Petersburg. The city is still deserted by the nobility and gentry, who will not return from their country residence for some time, as the season continues remarkably pleasant, and it is seldom they enjoy such weather in August.

Her Imperial Majesty is arrived in the city from the palace of Zariko Zelo, for the winter. A very numerous cavalcade attended her Majesty; the whole preceded by a party of hussar-guards. Catharine
stopped

stopped at the Casan church: Te Deum was sung for the victories obtained over the enemies of the empire. I stood very near this great Sovereign, and could not help noticing, that the pictures given of Catharine II. in some books of Travels bear no resemblance to the original.

Catharine II. is rather under the middle stature, and rather corpulent in her person; yet majestic in her deportment. This Empress has not only the art of appearing, but possesses the quality of being great. She seldom comes into public, even to the Theatre. The spread eagle over the empty box, facing the stage, points out where once her Majesty sat, and seems to point out too that the bird is flown. The Imperial palace in the city, and that at Zarsko Zelo, have each of them private theatres for the entertainment of the Court, and of others who have interest enough to procure tickets, which are given gratis. The Grand Duke, Paul Petrowitsch, is handsome in person, of a middling stature, and has something greatly good in his countenance. The Grand Du-
chess

chefs is majestic both in her person and manner. The young Imperial Family are a group of lovely angels.

It is only within these few days that I have had an opportunity of observing the Russian diversions during summer. I find the citizens crowding every evening into the gardens of the summer palace upon the banks of the Neva. They are the St. James's Park of the Russians, and at this time a very delightful parade. Early this summer I entered them for the first time, and in walking through one of the bird-cage avenues, I met the Bashaw of Oczakow, attended by several Turkish officers. I stepped aside, and viewed with respect this illustrious prisoner; one of the guardians of the crescent. He is treated here with politeness and attention, due to his fidelity and courage more than to his rank.

The gardens belonging to the cadet corps is another resort for the better class upon Sunday. Military music salutes the company from different parts of the gardens. This season provided a new military con-

cert. In the wooden building erected in the midst of a small piece of water, a band of Turkish performers were placed. Was it fair to make the sons of Mahomet fiddlers to *infidel* conquerors? These late drummers and fifiers to the garrison of Oczakow gave the Russians a most melancholy and grating tune for their pains. The Turks beat a sort of drum with one stick, and made a sort of whistle produce melodies resembling the notes of a young pig when its ears are sharply pinched. The Russian drum and fife, the bassoon and clarionet, relieved at intervals my organs, and brought into order my sense of hearing, which was distracted with the Ottoman oratorio.

The young cadets, dressed in white or brown, agreeably to their ages, walked round the gardens, preceded by their masters: the youngest class by the women of the nursery. Parties of the oldest are encamped in the environs of the city, during summer, where they are taught their exercises, and particularly the management of the artillery. Hence it has been long observed

served of the Russian army, that it is the best served in the world with artillery, and artillery officers and engineers. Peter I. carried always a moveable fortress with his army: at the battle of Pultowa he had eighty cannon; the Swedes had four or six field pieces.

The Russians take as much delight in the firing of guns as they do in ringing of bells. Artillery in summer makes a part of rural entertainments. I was yesterday at one of the summer carnivals given by the nobility to the public. Count Strogonoff's villa and gardens are pleasantly situated on one of the islands at the mouth of the Neva, and bordering on this river. Here were collected a very great concourse of people of all ranks. In the front gallery of the Count's house were a chosen band of vocal and instrumental performers: the first consisted chiefly of boys and girls. As we walked in the forests adjoining to the house we were serenaded with favourite Russian airs. Dukes, generals, admirals, traders, and boors, mixed
P 2 together

together. The tents, erected among the trees, received those guests who conceived, with Sancho Pancha, that eating and drinking is the best of all earthly enjoyments. I could see a select company of Germans, snugly seated; their ears attentive to the music, their eyes to some slices of ham.

Under a wooden pavilion open at the sides, those who chose to exercise their limbs, had a room railed in for dancing, and a band of musicians. Here the ladies of easy virtue, and the virtuous maiden dressed in her Sunday gown, tripped about, to the great entertainment of the titled spectators. Few join in this assembly, except the lower ranks; but the outside of the rail was crowded with ladies of the first distinction.

A sky-rocket gave notice that the fireworks were begun. The assembly broke up: the fiddlers and dancers crowded together through the woods to the open area before Count Strogonoff's villa. A very entertaining Greenwich Park scene too was exhibited, when beaux and belles, amidst a display

display of fireworks, endeavoured in tumultuous throngs to escape the falling fire-balls. The Count's windows and galleries accommodated his visitors of quality, among whom were distributed the good things of this life. The Count has a property in iron mines from which he derives a liberal income, and which he spends with equal liberality. This evening's amusement concluded with a general discharge of the cannon from a battery upon the banks of the Neva.

The company now filed off towards Petersburg, some in coaches, others in troskies, which convey half a dozen or a dozen people. The forest echoed with the found of wheels and fongs. Several Russians had devoted the day to Bacchus, and were singing his praises with all the strength they had remaining. Their drunken fongs are sung in a different strain from their sober ditties, though the words and air may be the same. In the former you hear a continued roar, for some moments, or minutes, as their breath may hold out; silence then

P 3

succeeds

succeeds for the same length of time, until they recover breath. When a drunken Russian has finished his first stanza and his breath, he rests his head upon his shoulders, gaping for a fresh supply of æther: he recovers gradually, as from a fainting fit, and joins again the grand chorus of his friends. He who first recovers wind begins, and the rest instantly accompany him, with what breath they have gathered. Many fall off from the trosky before the journey is ended; but the song is not interrupted by these trifling accidents: there is always one or two in their seats who keep the music alive: the driver stops the carriage, until his prostrate brothers replace themselves, but continues his song. Even the unfortunate, while they lie upon their back in the road, do not cease to perform their task in the concert.

In the summer evenings, when the weather is calm, the citizens of Petersburg delight in sailing upon the Neva in their pleasure boats. The boats of the nobility are very elegantly ornamented. The company
are

are seated in the stern, under a canopy of silk, or other stuff, and have with them musicians; or frequently the party themselves perform upon different instruments. The rowers are all chosen among such of their servants as have the best voices; and they either sing in concert with the instruments, or without them. When they have rowed the boat against the stream, beating time to their songs with the oars, they allow her to drive with the current, fixing their oars in a horizontal position from the boat sides; and the rowers collect in a circle. It is at this period they exert their vocal powers, and make such exquisite harmony, as to draw the inhabitants to the galleries of their houses upon the river's banks, and the foot passengers to the water's edge, to listen to the music; and many follow the boat to enjoy their native tunes. The vocal and instrumental parts are generally performed alternately, and among the former is always one, who with a whistle, or by blowing upon his fingers, makes a very shrill noise, accompanying the music at intervals.

P 4

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When the concert is ended, the audience upon the streets go away, repeating the songs, and echoing them into every quarter of the city. Perhaps another boat, conveying another concert, approaches, and arrests the auditors of the first melodies.

These concerts often continue till ten and eleven o'clock at night; and when still silence reigns upon the face of the waters, it is beyond the power of description to convey any idea of the pleasing effect they have upon the mind.

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LETTER XIX.

*Russian Climate.—A Russian Wedding.—
Anecdote of an old Russian Soldier—of a
Band of Gypsies.*

Ingria, September 1789.

THE season still continues remarkably mild and pleasant. If this good weather continues a little longer, I shall alter my opinion of the Russian climate: this last summer has made us amends for the severe winter of 1788-89. Ever since the middle of April it has been hot and clear weather without interruption, and without being accompanied with so much thunder as we might naturally have expected. The gnats or musquitos venture abroad only in the day time; the evening, when the sun is down, turns cold, and the month fast approaches when these plagues of man and beast will be frozen for nine months. The

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gnat

gnat is succeeded in the business of tormenting animals, by the common fly. It is chiefly in June and July that the gnat is troublesome: the common fly bites in August and September. The sting of the gnat is hardly felt while they remain fixed upon your hands or legs; the pain is occasioned by the swelling afterwards. When the gnat is fixed, it is better to allow it to take its belly full of blood and go away. If it is killed upon the spot, some part of the proboscis frequently remains in the wound, and causes more acute pain than would be felt otherwise. Rubbing the wound likewise augments the torture. The Russian gentlemen generally wear thin leather stockings under their silk ones, to defend them from those winged warriors. The bite of the common fly is instantly attended with a sharp pain, but without any swelling. I dread them much more than I do the gnats, whose wounds I can cure without feeling uneasiness, by directly applying some lemon juice, when the plunderer has left me. I wear Indian musquito trowsers, which are prefer-

preferable to stockings of leather, not being so warm.

The nobility have all gone into town, though a country residence is more delightful just now than at any time during the sultry months. But the Russian almanacks have fixed the entry of frost and snow in September, and the gentry will not trust in the flattering appearance of their skies. I am a whimsical Briton, and have come again to visit woods and rivers while the sun shines, and to enjoy the fragments of a Russian summer, which the great folks despise.

I am told the winter comes, in the latitude of Petersburg, with awful rapidity; and that you take farewell of summer at night, and hail the grim tyrant in the morning, who thunders around in a whirlwind, thickened with snow and icicles. Let him come! I must see it and feel it: nor will I retreat, even before a Scythian winter. Cronstadt is yet filled with British ships, which have a long stormy voyage to perform, before they can anchor upon their native

tive shores. I have only two hours' journey to go into the city, and into shelter. The British ship-masters call at the house I lodge at, in their way from Cronstadt to Petersburg, as they generally come over land, after passing from Cronstadt to Oranienbaum. There are now several of them in the parlour making merry. I tell them to hasten their departure—mention the dangers of a late passage home—and press upon their recollection the risk of having their vessels frozen in the harbour of Cronstadt. In reply they call for another bottle, taking notice of the late period at which they had failed from Russia in former years.

We have a wedding in the post-house: the ship-masters take a peep at the bride, and swear that she is a good piece; adding many sea-phrases illustrative of her beauties and of the happiness of the bridegroom. The bride is the daughter of one of the officers of the posts: the bridegroom is a chorister from one of the churches at St. Petersburg.

I went with the company to the church of St. Sergius, to behold the Russian ceremonies

monies at the altar of Hymen. The young couple kissed every saint within the walls, crossing themselves opposite to each. The priest, having made several gestures and grimaces, joined their hands and kissed them. This was the signal for a universal attack upon the lips of all present. I hid myself in a corner to avoid the disagreeable encounter of long beards: however, I soon recollected there was no occasion for this precaution. The Russians permit foreigners to behold every religious ceremony without demanding any outward respect or attention, either to priest or people, further than remaining uncovered and silent. The bride, from the time she had yielded consent, to the day of her nuptials, was attended in her hut by two such virgins as herself; who continued singing with her from morning to night for two or three weeks. If she paid a visit in the neighbourhood, the attendant nymphs, singing as they went along, accompanied her. The bride's acquaintance, male and female, enter the hut during this festival, making what presents they are

are able to bestow, and in return, they are at liberty to kiss the bride and bride's maids, who entertain them with songs into the bargain. Our cook, in the course of his visit, has fallen a sacrifice to the blue eyes of one of the bride's maids; but she piques herself upon her family connections, and has refused the poor fellow: she says she is the Empress's slave, and that the cook is only the slave of a private gentleman.

The wedding folks, at their return from church, assembled in one of the rooms of the post-house; and Apollo and Daphne, of whom I have formerly made honourable mention, performed upon this, as they usually do upon every great occasion. The bridegroom, taking his bride by the hand, led the dance. This ended, he entertained us with his songs: and it is but justice to say, that he sung like a nightingale.

It was formerly a custom in Russia, nor is it yet become wholly obsolete, for the friends of the young couple, soon after they had retired to rest, to enquire if the marriage articles were completely ratified. I do not know

know whether or not this question was asked upon the present occasion. The bride of herself declared next morning, with tears in her eyes, that she had been cheated! and that her husband was good for nothing but for singing of hymns. The bridegroom looked very silly. A monk, his acquaintance, who came with the chorister from Peterburg, declared, that he was a very good kind of man, and that he had lent him thirty rubles to bear the expence of the wedding dinner. The fathers have, perhaps, sent abroad this syren to charm a few birds into their net.

The watchman at the post-office is an old soldier, of eighty years of age. He tells us of the engagements in which he had fought, in the war with Prussia, in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth. This veteran was lately found in the wood, in amorous dalliance with the gardener's wife, whom he had debauched from the paths of virtue with a bottle of Russian brandy. The other servants dogged the turtles to their nest, stripped the sheep's skin from the warrior's

warrior's back, carried it to the nearest spirit-shop, and pawned it for brandy; to which mulct, offenders against the laws of chastity among the rural nymphs and swains are liable in Russia.

In my walks a few days ago I encountered with a band of gypsies, the first I had seen in the country. The females, as usual, offered, for a small gratuity, to scan the secrets of fate and futurity. There were several beautiful girls journeying bare-footed with the caravan, an itinerant beggar's opera. I had seen a party of this Squadron at some distance, at the window of a Finlander's hut, and heard them earnestly entreating the landlady to give them bread and salt. The landlady remained obdurate, and the prayers of the gypsies were changed into curses. I entered the same hut, and procured some milk. The woman of the house told me that she was daily plagued with those people. That she gave them sometimes bread in summer; but that the long winter approaching, and having a large family, she could not spare any thing from her store of provisions.

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LETTER XX.

*Description of the City of Petersburg.—
Old Petersburg.—The Citadel.—Williams
Island.—The Exchange.—Museum.—Im-
perial Academies.—Cadet Corps.—Statue
of Peter the Great.—Imperial Palace, &c.
&c.*

St. Petersburg, October 1789.

PETERSBURG, with all its stately palaces and gilded domes, is situated in the midst of a wood, as wild and barren as any in the north. It presents a wonderful picture of what power and genius can accomplish. Independently of art, the Neva is its only ornament: a dead, sandy, flat country, covered with brush-wood, surrounds it upon every side; a few miserable huts, scattered about, complete the scene. The great Pe-

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ter did not look to the most beautiful, but to the most useful spot, for the scite of his capital: his object was commerce solely. Petersburg is the emporium for naval, Moscow for rural affairs. The Russian empire, extending over a considerable part of Europe and Asia, must have a capital city to every kingdom of which it consists. Tobolsky is the chief city of the Russian dominions under the pole, and bordering upon China; Petro Paulousky, of the eastern countries adjoining to America and Japan; Orenburg, of the provinces bordering upon Tartary and India; Casan and Astrakan, of kingdoms of the same name, near the frontiers of Persia; Cherson, of the Crimea and provinces adjoining; and Kioff and Mohilow, of the Ukraine and Little and White Russia bordering upon Turkey and Poland.

The city of Petersburg is not huddled together: it spreads out like the wings of the Imperial eagle. The principal quarter stands upon the continent, and upon the south banks of the river Neva; the second division is what is called Old Petersburg, and

and is situated upon several islands towards the north banks; the third quarter upon Williams Island, in the middle channel of the Neva, betwixt the other two. This noble river, after embracing the whole in its course, empties itself into the Gulph of Finland immediately below the city. The old city, originally built upon one island, bearing its name, now stretches over several lesser ones. It is very irregularly built, and consists chiefly of wooden houses: here, however, are the first objects that draw attention—the citadel, in which is the cathedral, a fine pile of building, with its gilded spire and turrets; whose sparkling grandeur strikes the eye at a great distance, and marks the sacred spot where lie interred the remains of Peter I. and his Empress, the Livonian villager, Catharine I. This is the Russian Mecca, and none but infidels will neglect to make a pilgrimage to it. Mahomet's splendid imposture collects together a crowd of vagrant Turks and Arabs; but the mausoleum of Peter attracts the philosopher as well as the warrior,

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rior, from every corner of enlightened Europe: the first admires the legislator; the second comes to touch the bones of Scanderbeg!

The boat which gave Peter the idea of building a navy, is carefully preserved in a small house near the sepulchre: it is emphatically called the *Grand Sire*. Before this relic was deposited here, a naval review took place at Cronstadt: the *Grand Sire* had the honour of carrying the Admiral's flag, and received a general salute from the Russian fleet.

Some will say, that the Russian nation is not yet civilized; and that Peter only began the work of civilization—of arts and sciences. What a narrow thought! When the work is finished it is his. Will succeeding monarchs think themselves disgraced in being named the disciples of this immortal Prince? He gave the plan of the building—he laid the foundations, and reared a part of the walls! Succeeding monarchs are his workmen, his bricklayers, slaters, carpenters, painters, and upholsterers.

Catharine

Catharine II. is the most distinguished of Peter's work people, and has made such elegant improvements upon the original plan, that it is so far become her own. The hatchet was the Emperor's favorite instrument: his work was useful, but unpolished. He seemed to be sensible of this, and early called in the assistance of a female. Another Catharine is born to him: the fine arts go hand in hand with those of war, of agriculture and commerce.

From Old Petersburg we proceed along a bridge of boats to Williams Island. Upon the north side, and fronting the old town, are the merchants wharfs, the exchange, the custom-house, and warehouses. In the river, between Old Petersburg and Williams Island, lie all the vessels that take down to Cronstadt the produce of Russia, to the larger foreign ships, that cannot come to Petersburg, the channel being narrow and shallow at the mouth of the river. These vessels likewise bring from Cronstadt all goods imported, landing them at the custom-house to secure the duties. The south

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side

sides of Williams Island fronts the new city of Petersburg; and here is built a superb line of houses, among which are the Imperial Academies and the Museum. The Imperial Academy of Sciences is a grand structure, and is amply endowed for its support. The professors are eminent in the republic of letters, and are of different nations. Her Imperial Majesty, to adorn those establishments, selects merit from every climate and country.

The museum is situated upon the highest and east point of Williams Island, opposite to the imperial palace upon the continent to the south; and the citadel to the north. The west point of this island reaches to the mouth of the Neva. The museum, I beg her Imperial Majesty's pardon, is a small warehouse, containing samples of the various productions of her empire. This world of dominion furnishes a museum of itself; yet no expence has been spared to complete the collection with every curious production from other countries. Here the naturalist and merchant find equal pleasure; the

the one views with rapture the veins of gold, silver, and lead, in the native ore ; the other considers how much one hundred weight will produce of pure metal,

The Cadet Corps, or Academy of War, formerly the palace of Prince Menzikoff, is situated betwixt the Academy of Sciences and the Museum : is the nursery of young warriors, the sons of the nobility and gentry ; and from this seminary of Mars are taken the officers for the army. The palace of Prince Menzikoff was applied to its present use by Count Munich. There are a number of buildings adjoining, for the accommodation of the young gentlemen.

The history of Menzikoff is romantic. Raised from the humblest station to the rank of prince, then racked upon the wheel of fortune ; yet, in every situation, the art military continued his favourite study. During his banishment in Siberia, the table of his cottage was always covered with maps and plans of the countries, the seats of former wars, and of battles in which he had been engaged ;—still delighting in what had

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occasioned

occasioned his fall, and poring over his destruction ! It must appease his manes, that his house is still the nursery of war.

Except this line of building upon the banks of the Neva, and another street, the whole of this quarter of the city consists of wooden houses. These are built very regularly in streets intersecting each other at right angles : canals run through the middle of the streets ; but, owing to the level surface of the ground, the water in them, in the heat of summer, stagnates, and is offensive. They serve no good purpose, and it would be proper to fill them up with earth.

A bridge of boats crosses the Neva opposite the Cadet Corps, making a communication from Williams Island to the grand quarter of the city upon the continent. As you walk along this bridge, you have a front view of the equestrian statue of Peter I. which is erected upon the opposite bank of the river : the horse, upon the summit of a rock, majestically rearing, and pawing the air—seems conscious of his rider—" he smells " the battle afar off ; his neck is clothed
9 " with

"with thunder." Around the statue are always several Russians, attended by some biographer. You can trace, without any knowledge of the language, by the gestures of the orator and his audience, when he is recording the defeat at Narva, or the victory at Pultowa. They add in these orations, that Peter stood upon the very rock which now supports his effigy, while he beheld the Swedish army fly from the field of battle. I have taken a drawing of this celebrated work of M. Falconer. I was assisted by an engraving from a drawing of Young, and have endeavoured to correct some errors in that drawing; or perhaps his engraver has not done justice to the drawing. "When an heroic monument," says M. Falconer *, "is to be consecrated to the memory of a prince, and this prince has achieved great matters in various and even opposite departments—he has gained victories in war—he has enacted wise laws, and founded establish-

* Translation from the French of M. Falconer's *Pieces on Sculpture*, by the Rev. Mr. Tooke of Petersburg.

ments

“ments conducive to the happiness of his
“people in time of peace—his academical
“eulogium may turn upon both these texts:
“but in a statue, which can represent but one
“instant, we must consider and choose. If
“we give a preference to his civil qualities
“over his military virtues, this preference
“cannot justly be condemned, till it shall
“certainly be determined which of these two
“kinds of glory belongs more particularly
“to him, who has so well deserved them
“both; but more especially, which of them
“was most useful to the happiness of man-
“kind. The habit I have given the statue
“of Peter the Great, is the habit of all na-
“tions—of all men—of every age—in a
“word, it is an heroic habit.”

Upon the right hand of the statue, and to the east, is the Admiralty and Dock-yards, and immediately beyond these the Imperial palace. At this instant there are two first rate ships of war building under the Palace windows! From the Admiralty spire, all the streets run out as radii from the centre of a circle. The principal street is that line of buildings

buildings fronting the Neva, for an extent of between three and four English miles. The bank for the same extent is lined with granite stone, with balustrades, and footpath of the same materials. Near the extremities of this superb street, called the Grand Million, and which, taking the course of the Neva, forms a vast obtuse angle, a canal is cut across the main land, making the base of this angle, and surrounding the city upon the continent to the south; so that this quarter is entirely inclosed, with the Neva on one side, and this canal upon the other, for an extent of about eight miles; the whole bank lined with granite stone, having granite balustrades or iron railing. Over these canals are erected draw-bridges, likewise built of granite stone. The quarter without this canal may be deemed the suburbs; the houses are mostly of wood, but the houses within the canal are mostly of brick, and plaistered, painted with every variety of colours. No house is suffered to be rebuilt within the canal, of wood, but with brick; and the new is quickly driving the old city out of the gates!

Amidst these modern fabrics, the Russian churches every where shoot up their antique turrets! The Russians hold the form of their church-walls as sacred as their forms of religion within them. The roofs are covered with block-tin, and many of them gilded.

There are in Petersburg three Imperial palaces: the palace near the Admiralty, in which her Imperial Majesty resides, is a magnificent edifice of brick stuccoed, and adjoining is a long range of buildings fronting the Neva, including the private theatre of the Court. The Marble Palace is built of the stone which gives it this name. The architect has made what ought to have been the gavel, the front of this superb building, which seems itself to blush at its posture. The third is the Summer Palace, built of timber, and yet the most regular and elegant. It is placed in the summer gardens upon the banks of the river, and is truly a delightful residence.

The Russian nobles, and even the middling ranks, exceed in the elegance of their houses. In the Asiatic style, they are all built in squares;

squares; an open court in the centre, to which is an entry by a large gate-way. With this taste is mixed the Grecian and Italian: and Corinthian, Ionic, and other ornaments are too much crowded upon the slight fabric of brick and plaister. It would be better to finish their houses in a plainer style; and the easier expence would enable the possessors to keep them in better repair. Nothing looks so tawdry as a Corinthian cornice of plaister in ruins. The new church near the equestrian statue is building of the finest Siberian marble, and will be one of the most costly and superb structures in the universe. The granite banks of the Neva, the equestrian statue of Peter I. and this admirable building, will deliver down to the latest posterity the name of Catharine II. But Catharine is imperial in every thing; and posterity will overlook even these monuments, amidst the continued display of great actions. The palace near the Admiralty is situated at the point of the angle which the river makes; and here the Neva rolls his tide, embracing the lodging of his sovereign.

sovereign. From this spot one has the grandest prospect imaginable: before you, upon the other side of the river, is the old city, with its citadel and gilded spire; the houses surrounded or intermixed with woods. Williams Island presents another prospect of a different nature: a wood of masts, planted in front of the streets. To the right and left is the Grand Million, every house in which is of elegant structure, and inhabited by the principal Russian nobility and gentlemen. The Admiralty dock-yards are soon to be removed to Cronstadt, a more convenient place, adapted to the site of the naval yards. The vacancy from the palace to the equestrian statue and Senate House will be filled with buildings; and the Grand Million will be one continued range of taste and splendor.

I am at a loss to guess what induced the Emperor to pitch upon so awkward a spot for dock-yards; from which the ships must be transported to Cronstadt, over shoals, by means of wooden camels, when this trouble could have been so easily avoided by building

ing his navy at the harbour where they lie, and where there is a great depth of water and every accommodation. The machines called camels are constructed of two pieces, or a sort of half-vessels, built in the same manner as other vessels, but of a singular shape. They are square at the bottom, the ends, and one side; the other side is hollow and rounding. These half-vessels are sunk to a proper depth, one at each side of the ship of war they are intended to carry; and their hollow sides, being drawn close to her, form a capacious womb which embraces the ship of war. They are strongly wrapped together with cables. The water is then pumped out of the camels; they rise, and with them the ship of war! Perhaps you will have a better idea of the camels, by supposing an oblong shaped basin cut lengthways from the top to the bottom: the hollow sides of each half basin will exactly resemble those of the half camels. Again, join the two halves together, and they form the womb which receives the burthen. The

camels

camels with their loads do not draw above eight to eleven feet of water.

Peter, probably anxious to shew his navy to the Russians, built his ships at Peterburg, where there was a greater number to look at them. He had experienced difficulty in prevailing upon his subjects to come to the capital, and still more in making them embark for Cronstadt. The moment they beheld the Finland Gulph and heard the roaring surge, they made a full stop, or shrunk back with terror at the awful designs of their Prince!

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LETTER XXI.

Description of Cronstadt.—Fortress of Cronslot.—Admiralty.—Naval Cadet Academy. Palace of Oranienbaum.—Palace of Peterhoff.—Anecdotes of Peter the Great.

St. Petersburg, January 1790.

IN arriving from the Baltic, at the head of the Gulph of Finland, you see before you a small low island, partly covered with woods, and at the east end the city and fortifications of Cronstadt. Opposite to these, and to the entrance of the harbour, to the south, at a quarter of a mile's distance, is the fortress of Cronslot, built upon a bank in the sea. The foundations of the fortress are several feet under water. The channel leading from Cronstadt to the open gulph is very narrow, which constitutes its strength.

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A few ships of the line could defend it against a very superior force.

The harbour of Cronstadt is formed by wooden and stone piers, projecting in a half moon from the main body of the island. These piers serve at the same time as ramparts, and are planted with a number of heavy cannon. This harbour is divided into three grand divisions: the most westerly is for the merchant ships, which lie in lines abreast of each other, moored at buoys. The middle and east divisions are appropriated for the Russian navy. From the middle harbour a canal runs to the centre of the town, where the Admiralty and dock-yards are constructing. The banks of this canal are faced with granite, and the docks and piers will likewise be finished with the same durable and elegant material. The fortress of Cronstot is entirely built from the granite quarries.

The Russians are necessarily superb in their public buildings: they have no other materials for such works than marble, granite, and jasper. Their palaces are built with the two first; and the inside walls are wain-

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cotted with agate, jasper, and lapis lazuli. Siberia furnishes a variety of precious stones, and enables the Russian monarchs to vie in splendor with those princes of India of whose magnificence the accounts appear romantic.

The Admiralty will contain every accommodation for the officers employed in it, as well as barracks for the officers of the navy residing at Cronstadt, who have apartments and other necessities at the expence of Government at all times. The whole will be one of the most complete and noble works of the age. Admiral Greig was the active agent in all these undertakings.

The town of Cronstadt is pretty regularly built, but consists mostly of wooden houses. Except a few buildings for the reception of the officers of Government and for the naval cadets, it has no ornament but its harbour. The removal of the Admiralty from Petersburg is in every respect necessary, to give importance and elegance to the Plymouth of Russia.—Cronstadt is a well-chosen seminary for the naval cadets : they have

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here the practice of seamanship continually before their eyes: they view in the west the stormy ocean, and are daily accustomed to scenes in which they are intended themselves to act.

The Gulph of Finland contracts itself below Cronstadt, closing gradually in a semicircle towards that port and Petersburg. The breadth of the gulph at Cronstadt is about fifteen miles, from the Carelian to the Ingrian shore. The first, to the north, presents to the view nothing but gloomy woods: Ingria, to the south, is proudly decorated with the palaces of Oranienbaum, Peterhoff, and Strelina, and a number of the seats of the nobility. Oranienbaum is directly opposite to Cronstadt. I embarked in one of the boats which ply the passage here. The winds gently fanned our sails: the sooty clouds in the western horizon threatened a sudden storm. The seamen pulled hard at the oar to gain the land before it should overtake us. We had just entered the harbour of Oranienbaum, when the whirlwind thundered around our heads.

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Some boats were at this moment passing to Cronstadt: they were hid in the spray of the sea, and in the gloomy squalls; and I remained in dreadful suspense for the fate of the passengers!

The palace of Oranienbaum is situated on a rising ground: the city spreads upon the shore, nearer the sea; and the harbour is at a mile's distance from both, but communicating with them by means of a canal which reaches to the park gates of the palace. The ground through which this canal passes is swampy—the banks have been constructed at a great expence, with earth and stones. To the westward of Oranienbaum the coast swells into hills, variegated with woods and farm-houses.

The palace of Oranienbaum consists of different buildings, connected by galleries. From the top of these, one has a delightful prospect of the ocean covered with vessels, of Cronstadt and of Petersburg. It originally belonged to the celebrated Menzikoff. The apartments are neat, but convey no idea of princely residence. The gardens are small,

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and in the old Dutch style: in them however is a fine piece of water, where lie several pleasure yachts. The rising grounds and woods on all sides of this lake give it the appearance of a harbour land-locked; and you look around to discover where it communicates with the sea.

The city of Oranienbaum is a collection of wooden houses, and contains nothing worthy the notice of a traveller. It is a kind of out-post to the capital, and one or two regiments of horse or foot are generally stationed here; at present it is crowded with Cossack troopers. The road from this place to Peterhoff is close by the shore, through a deep sand and wild forests; yet here, to gladden the dreary journey, we meet with some gentlemen's country seats. I arrived at last at the village of Peterhoff, and passing under an avenue of branching trees, in which are built several handsome wooden houses for the accommodation of the Court when her Imperial Majesty resides at the palace of Peterhoff, I saw this famous lodging before me.

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The palace of Peterhoff, bearing the name of its great founder, is situated upon a rising ground; the gardens extending from the palace to the sea shore. Peterhoff is a long, narrow building, and, for the time it was built, elegant. It has only one range of apartments, but these are handsome and superb. This was the Imperial hamlet of Peter. It was a great stretch of his magnificence in things only ornamental; when he laid the foundation of Peterhoff: it was intended for the entertainment of foreign ambassadors, rather than for his own convenience.

Peter was never at ease in his robes: the hatchet and sword were always in his mind; and he sometimes forgot himself so far, as to invite the ambassador to assist him in cutting down trees for his dock-yards! He was another Uncle Toby; but his plans were not to be executed in less bounds than those which the universe afforded!

In this house are pictured the naval triumphs of Russia, sacred to the memory of its first inhabitant, and creator of the navy—

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the defeat of the Turkish fleet in the Archipelago, and their total destruction in the Bay of Tschesme, by the Russian fleet, under the command of Count Alexis Orlov. The Turkish fleet, the town and fortrefs of Tschesme, were totally destroyed, and here they are still burning on the canvass! But the grand collection of Russian statues and paintings is deposited in the palace of Zarsko-Zelo.

The famous John Barclay, in the beginning of the last century, wrote a book, which he entitled *Icon Animorum*, A Picture of Minds; or, 'The Characters of Nations. Were such a book as this, or even short sketches of national characters and customs, accompanied by paintings representing the various *costumes*, dresses, attitudes, ordinary amusements and occupations of the people of different countries; the study of modern history, as well as of the influence of climate, food, and manners, in the formation of the countenance and stature—and of physiognomy too, if there be such a science—would be facilitated and extended to an astonishing

astonishing degree. The painted figures, compared and contrasted with each other, would convey instruction by a kind of intuitive discernment, and all the powers of the mind would be enlivened. Even without any written account, an assemblage of the physiognomies, features, dresses, and shapes of all nations, in all countries, with the most habitual attitudes of their members, would present of itself a noble field of speculation, and contribute very much to the advancement of the most interesting science—the science of man.

This magnificent design might be attempted, not without a degree of success, by the graving tool. But there are several particulars in the pictures of nations, which cannot be hit off by the engraver, though they may be represented with great felicity by the painter—such as the tints and shades of complexion, the appearance of the sky, the colour of the foliage, and other natural objects, that form the ground on which the human figures are introduced.

Such a *Tableau de Nations* would be an act of munificence to the muses, worthy of the present

present Empress of Russia. As there is no sovereign prince who sways the sceptre over so many nations, so there is none to whom the world can so naturally look up for so grand and so various a picture. The Emperors of China, in their extensive and magnificent gardens, endeavour to exhibit as it were a miniature picture of the natural world : it would be an object worthy of Catharine II. to enrich the republic of art, and also that of science, by a delineation of moral character. Peterhoff is the naval house of Russia; Oranienbaum the military house. In this last is a fine painting, representing the glorious battle of Pultowa; in which, too, the original builder of the mansion, Menzikoff, performed a principal part. Every thing belonging to this Alexander has been consecrated to military use.

The gardens are in the same style with the others : the statues of gods and goddesses keep sentry at every turning; and cascades roll down gilded stairs in place of rocks, which are a scarce commodity in this province; and every cascade, and brook, and lake, have their guardian deities. Peterhoff
gardens

gardens present a picture of Lapland mythology: Neptune is placed upon his car in a fish-pond, drawn by sea-horses; and, as usual, the courtiers swimming round their sovereign, and sounding his praise through sea-shells.

The arts and sciences never approached Russia, until these statues appeared. They are sacred, and the arm that removes them shall wither from its shoulder. The gardens should likewise be preserved in their present state,

Upon the banks of a small lake, near the shore, is a house in which Peter usually resided, and enjoyed himself in living without that pomp which his residence in the larger mansion obliged him to assume: here the servants shew the fishing and hunting accoutrements of the Emperor, and the utensils of cookery with which this hero dressed his beef-stakes! I suspect that they are only copies of the original, which, no doubt, are removed into safer custody. The servants, no doubt, make money of these *relics*; the reverence for the memory of Peter

ter will increase the price ; and the guards have, unquestionably, cheated as many watchmen as at the tomb of the Prophet.

In the lake are a great variety of fish, perch, carp, and other kinds. It is not permitted to any one to throw a hook, and the finny tribe are so familiar from this good usage, that they will take a bit of bread almost out of your hand.

I went to see the diamond mills. To this manufactory are brought the precious stones found in Siberia and other parts.

Near Peterhoff, and in the midst of a forest, is a garden executed in the modern English taste—a very delightful spot ; and, when the natural flatness of the ground is considered, it is amazing what art and taste have been exerted in finishing it.—Here are winding rivulets, cascades dashing over moss-clad rocks, antique bridges, temples, ruins, and cottages. In one of the huts I found a collection of prints, from the subject of Sterne's Sentimental Journey : *La Fleur's* dapple seemed to be running off with the jack-boots to the pole. In this garden

is building a new palace for the Grand Duke. At Peterhoff, the elegant road, formerly noticed, begins, and continues from this palace to the gates of the capital. The verft pillars are built of granite and marble. This road is level as a bowling-green: the distance to Petersburg is twenty-six versts, or eighteen miles. Strelina palace is nine versts from Peterhoff, and seventeen from the metropolis.

I am sorry to inform you of the failure of Mr. G——e S——l, one of the British factors here. His character among his countrymen, and among the Russians, was, and still is, highly esteemed. If the ambassadors at foreign courts were employed in affording patronage and assistance to those subjects of their respective sovereigns settled abroad, who do honour to their nation, they would be more usefully engaged than at present, in being the agents of war, and of the intrigues of their cabinets.

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LETTER XXII.

The Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche—his invidious Account of the Russians.—The vague Accounts given by late Travellers, and the Cause of it.—Character of the Russians.

Ingria, March 1790.

IT is to be regretted, that most of the writers upon this empire, have either given way to prejudice, or, on the contrary, were not at liberty to speak freely. Travellers of our own nation, from whom we might have expected the best accounts, pass along with such rapidity, that they seldom mention what is most material for us to know: they fill up volumes with tedious historical scraps; which, however valuable, are not to the purpose. The objects of a traveller and of an historian are different. The Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche, though he travelled

velled with the utmost expedition in Russia, was determined to decide upon the character of the nation. He seems to have viewed the faults of the Russians with the same telescope through which he observed the transit of Venus at Tobolski.

I am still at a loss to speak certainly of the character of the Russians. Is it fair to judge of a whole nation, by the heterogeneous mixture of people in Petersburg, a new metropolis? What are we to do? Shall we rely upon the accounts given us by foreigners residing in Petersburg? These are acquainted and connected only with the low traders among the Russians, who are, perhaps, as keen in their dealings as any people. Would it be fair to judge of the nations of Europe by the heterogeneous samples to be found in the warehouses here?

Petersburg is only the advanced guard of the Russian empire. We must refrain from pointed criticisms upon the character of the natives, until we have visited them at head quarters—in their private recesses

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in their villages, in the kingdoms of Kioff, of Moscovy, of Tiver, and of Novogorod. The Abbé d'Auteroche refuses them any title to ingenuity; but, unfortunately, he gives as a proof of his assertion, what proves exactly the reverse:

"In the Russian armies," says he, "the necessary tradesmen are not taken out of the shops of artificers, but a recruit is, by the officer, destined to exercise any particular art, to which, from his size or shape, he appears to be best adapted. A locksmen, for instance, is wanted in the company; a recruit has a lock put into his hands as a model, and he is ordered to make one like it. This word of command he executes, we are told, with the greatest address: it is only necessary that the model be perfect in its kind; he would otherwise copy it with all its most glaring defects."

It might be answered to the Abbé: the soldier being ordered to make the one lock like the other, did right in making it exactly so.

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The Abbé allows that the Russians are excellent at imitation; and if the instance he is pleased to mention in a common peasant is not a proof of ingenuity, it will be hard to define what is meant by the word. Let a lock in the same manner be put into the hands of a French or English peasant, they would fail even in copying the defects. The Abbé d'Auteroche attributes this imaginary want of intellect to their flat country and hot stoves: but he grants that they are capable of being taught. Is this any poverty of mind? Did the Abbé teach himself the knowledge of the planets, or was he obliged to some system of others? He, no doubt, made improvements from his own observations; but then, he had been taken from a work-shop, and was not a raw recruit.

The Russians are, at this day, children in the arts: yet, comparatively with other nations, they have made quicker improvements since the date of their first attempt. A traveller without much ingenuity may find out a field for criticism, without touching on the dull brains of the inhabitants. The young generation are full of life and
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fire, and resemble much the English youth of the same age. In this latitude, it is fairer to judge of the capability of the nation by the son than by the father; and before local evils have laid hold, as it were, of their characters. Their inordinate desire for money is strange, if it be true, that they hold it by so precarious a tenor as the will of their lords. Nothing but their love of brandy exceeds this; and for nothing else will they voluntarily part with cash.

The love of money pervades the higher ranks, if we can call it a love of money to wish for it only to have the pleasure of spending it. The nobility are fond of pomp; and, in order to support it, gold is wanted. The Court of Russia has long been famous for its splendour. The connection of this empire with India in former times, gave Russia the means as well as taste for eastern magnificence. The modern Knoetzes inherit, from their fathers at Moscow, the taste, but modern extravagance exhausts the means; and this sometimes occasions an avaricious conduct, from which the

the worst impressions have been received of the nobles and princes. The vanity of military rank puts it out of their power to increase their fortunes, which a strict attention to their peasants and estates would soon change for the better.

From this neglect arises a dependance upon government and upon great men in offices—a burthen to all parties. Their situation is the same as the nobility of other nations, where military parade and war are deemed more honourable than the arts of peace. Yet, even in our wealthy island, the extravagance of the higher ranks is not supported by the most affluent fortunes, and too many of them depend upon the court. After having squandered their fortunes among the public they become pensioners upon those whom they had thus patronised.

LETTER XXIII.

*Of the Plan adopted by Catherine II. for the
Emancipation of the Russian Peasantry.—
Manners and Customs of the Russians.—The
Simplicity of the Religion of the Peasantry.*

Ingria, June 1790.

BEFORE we bestow the appellation of barbarous upon the Russians—before we even call them slaves, it will be fair to look round among the other nations of Europe, and enquire what are the virtues and liberties which they boast of? If the most civilized are the most luxurious, which it might be easy to prove, they cannot be either virtuous or free. We shall find that luxury has debauched every European nation; and that those who boast most of liberty, are loaded with taxes, occasioned by

by the wars of ambitious ministers, supported by a venal representation of venal electors ! If this be the situation of the most powerful, and the freest nation upon earth, it will take away from the odious stigma of slave and barbarian so liberally given to a happy race of men. I may here observe, that the people being the root and stem of constitutions and laws, they must first amend themselves, before they can expect any good reformation. To begin by lopping branches is a ridiculous process.

The situation of the Russians, in regard to freedom and civilization is just what it ought to be, or might naturally be expected in their present circumstances, which have been the circumstances of every other nation in their turn.

I have seen learned treatises upon the subject of slavery, by those who have never seen a slave. They recommend to tear the bandages at once from eyes which have long remained in darkness, and expose them at once to the beams of the meridian sun. It may be as well, and as prudent, gradually

to prepare the way to freedom, by implanting principles of morality in their minds, in order to give them just ideas of the principles and particulars in which liberty consists, and of their duties to God and man: in short, to free the mind before the body. This is the field in which the political reformer should labour. It is only by the gradual maturation of moral causes, that rude and savage nature is to be trained up to the exercise of virtue, and the enjoyment of liberty. Let them first be made capable of being good members of what we call civilized society, or let them remain as they are, less luxurious, less vicious, and, if you will, less polished and free than we are.

Her Imperial Majesty, in establishing foundling hospitals in many different parts of the empire, establishes with them a nursery of freedom. In these the children of as many as please are received and educated, and put apprentices to any trade they may choose, when they arrive at a proper age; and they are thenceforth in every respect free. The new schools, planted in every
part

part of Russia for the education of youth, equally serve to promote the cause of liberty. Her Imperial Majesty was willing to give liberty even by more rapid means; and in the first outline of her new code of laws, a clause was inserted which would have nearly emancipated the peasantry: but it was soon found necessary to erase this clause, for the peace and safety of the nation. I will recommend to the Russian nobles and gentry, landed proprietors, a mode of liberating their peasantry which cannot be attended with any danger, or with any loss to them. Let them put a price upon freedom; let them raise a mark for their peasantry to strive to gain by industry. Were it even 100l. per head, the peasantry would soon emancipate themselves, by only continuing the present permission of entering into trade: the Russians engaged in trade are not inclined to drunkenness to such a degree as the common peasant in the country, but more generally sober and active.

Her Imperial Majesty, in building the city of Sophia near the palace of Zarko

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Zelo,

Zelo, so called after her maiden name, which was changed to Catharine upon her marriage, designed to make this infant city an asylum for the Russian peasantry who were oppressed by their lords, or who wished for liberty. It was soon found, however, that none but the most profligate and idle came to inhabit Sophia; and that the peasants considered Sophia only as the means of obliging their lords to agree to all their demands, by threatening to go there to reside: the asylum was consequently shut up. One circumstance, however, occurred, which points out an excellent plan for emancipating those who really deserve liberty. A Russian peasant had made a considerable fortune in trade; he offered his lord a price for his freedom; this was refused, the proprietor expecting, no doubt, to fleece the slave of all he was worth. The peasant, though a new city was open for his reception, still endeavoured to procure freedom by purchase. When every attempt failed he went to Sophia, where he now resides; and at present

present pays annually to government to the amount of several thousands sterling in duties for articles in which he traffics. The city of Sophia should still be a refuge for such, and for such only. Fix the price for freedom; give a slave a small property in land, or peculium, as among the Romans of old and our West India settlements at this day, with some time for cultivating it, and nothing more is wanting to every purpose—both that of humanity to the slave and justice to the master.

A common peasant, if he can make a shift to live and to pay his rent, has no other inducement to spur him to industry; and as that is done without much exertion, he falls into every vice of slavery. Hold up to him freedom, but not luxury, as a spur to industry. When this mark is fixed, their exertion to attain it will render them industrious; and this habit of industry will render them capable and deserving of freedom. They will have the more value for this that it has cost them dear, and naturally receive

ceive the idea, that, by a continuance of their industry they will best preserve their liberties.

The landholders need not be in any terror that their estates will be deserted by this emancipation of the slaves, if, when emancipated, they will give them small farms at moderate rents, payable in money. The Russians are, perhaps, more attached to their country than any people: they cannot all engage in trade, and a sufficient number will become farmers when they can call their own what remains in their barns after paying their rent. Their active dispositions incline them rather to commerce than agriculture, from the quick return of profit; but a Russian will accommodate himself to any situation where he has a certainty of making money, which he has not in his present situation. And it would be more honourable to the Russian nobility to be supported by revenues derived from the industry of freemen than from the labour of slaves; which, however, must of necessity be the case for some time longer: for slavery, after all, what-

whatever hot-headed fanatics may say or write, is absolutely one of the stages through which tribes and nations of men are destined to pass into free and nobler systems.

Travellers into Russia have described the servile demeanour of the Russian slave, particularly in his mode of salutation, in bowing his head to the earth; and they seem to rest upon this as a mark of a slavish mind. But we should not judge of people by so vague a proof as a peculiar mode of salutation or compliment. The Russian has as much meaning in this salute, as we have in subscribing ourselves the most humble servants of one another in letters. Besides, a Russian only observes this piece of politeness to his superior, his commander, or one on whom he has immediate dependance: and, at the very time he is bowing himself, he familiarly calls them brothers, as they also call him if they were the greatest princes in the empire. A Russian seldom lifts his hat to any person above his own rank, unless he knows him, and depends in some degree upon his favour; but they are punctual in
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this common salute to those of the same rank with themselves : they are constantly bowing to one another, and a stranger who does not enquire farther considers all this as a proof of servility. A traveller, marching through Russia, will receive more salutes of this kind from the peasantry, if he is clothed in a sheep-skin and a beard appending to his face, than if he were dressed in purple.

These instances of their customs are proofs of a very noble spirit in the natives. I cannot help observing here, that the Russian women are as elegant in their manner of saluting as the men are awkward : putting both hands upon their breast, they gently incline their head with the utmost grace and ease ; and a cottage girl will acquit herself as handsomely as a duchess. Nature has given all the Russian females a most bewitching manner of address, which is in direct contrast with the rough blunt male peasant ; who, except in the article of bowing, nearly resembles the bear whose fur he wears. Mr. Wraxall, however, complained, that in his journey of 4000 miles, he
could

could not obtain a single kiss from any of the ladies near the pole, unless from an old Swedish duchess wanting teeth. This must have been owing to the hasty manner of amorous youth, since the Rev. Mr. Coxe gives us a minute detail of the regular approaches to the lips of the northern damsels; no doubt, for the instruction of those of his countrymen who may visit Scandinavia. The effect of climate and local causes upon men and manners is wonderful! Man seems to take the very complexion of his body from that of the earth where he is situated.

Yet even in those frozen regions, they have found out a method, in some particulars, to counteract the ~~the~~ effect of climate. I have already observed, that the Russians are not such fools as to shiver, like many of our countrymen, under slight clothing even in the rigours of cold. The higher classes are wrapt close in furs, the lower in woolly skins of sheep; a kind of natural fleecy hosiery, one of the most important articles of British manufacture, which was
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first brought into notice by the late Lord Heathfield, a philosopher as well as a great military commander, not only as affording a most comfortable degree of warmth, but as a most efficacious remedy against rheumatism and the gout. The plan now in agitation, for disseminating knowledge, enterprise, and industry, at the northern and western extremities of Britain, by translating one of the COLLEGES at Aberdeen to Inverness, or perhaps Dingwall, and converting the empty building into a manufactory of the fine Scotch wool into garments of the fleecy hosiery kind, so well adapted to northern latitudes, under the auspices of the patentees of that useful invention, who are men of liberal minds, is highly worthy of all possible encouragement. The run from Aberdeen to the Baltic, where, and particularly at Petersburg, the demand for fleecy hosiery garments when once known will be great, is short and easy.

The antient Scandinavians had not found out the art of heating their houses by stoves, and the cold they suffered made them chaste

chaste in winter ! All sublime historians, in prose and verse, have therefore represented chastity as cold, and dressed her in virgin snow and icicles. The poets flated the temple of Diana with pieces of ice. The Russian cabins are so many hot-houses, which added to their baths, have created in both sexes the most amorous dispositions : and they cohabit together at as early an age as the natives of Indostan.

The Germans, Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians, having likewise the stove, preserve the summer heat in the bleak months, and are fond husbands and gallants all the year. Britons are moulded by other causes : without stoves, without clothing, no nation suffers so much from cold. It is surprising, then, that we are not as famous for our chastity as for our courage. Liberty is the stove which warms us ! Liberty gives commerce—commerce, wealth—wealth, luxury—and luxury, an amorous complexion.

As the Russian peasant is bound to the estate, the estate is no less bound to him. Every Russian landholder must pay his
taxes

taxes to government, and maintain them, by giving the rustics a sufficient portion of land. The proprietor, no doubt, exacts a rent; but sometimes the peasant uses the freedom to drink his crop, and the lord has no recourse but to the whip. A Russian peasant of the genuine breed, will risk a beating at any time, for a pint of brandy.

It has been observed, that the natural disposition of men is best discovered when they are in liquor. If this be the case, I can testify the good temper of the Russians. When they are drunk they continue kissing one another, untill they turn sober. Their lips are in constant motion, either emptying the bottle, sipping, or pressing the mouths of their bearded brothers. The ladies too, *of the lower classes*, sometimes indulge in libations to Bacchus!—However overpowered they may be, male or female, by the juice of barley, they never neglect to cross themselves when they come near to a church. The Russians, like the great men of other nations, leave their religion in the hands of the priests, and pay them for taking

taking charge of it. The clergy read the service and sing hymns, joined by a chosen band of choristers. The audience attend in respectful silence. The priests read the service with expedition, as if they were afraid that the audience should understand it; and indeed if one distinct word reach the ear of any of the congregation, they have reason to be proud of their quick hearing.

A Russian contents himself if he is a good man, with his good works: his religious duties consist in crossing himself. When he comes out of doors in the morning, the first thing he does is to cross himself, turning towards any church within sight, or to the sound of any bell within hearing. When he eats or drinks, he crosses himself before and after meals. When he lets his sledge for hire, he crosses himself upon receiving the fare. When he begins a journey, when he enters any house, when any thing remarkable occurs, as being informed of the death of a relation or acquaintance, a thunder storm, or whatever suddenly strikes his attention, he crosses himself. The Russian

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beggars,

beggars, of whom indeed, there are few in Russia, as every estate maintains its peasantry, have the most solemn manner of crossing themselves, and the most interesting humility of demeanour in asking charity, that can be imagined. Upon a holy-day, they place themselves before the churches, upon their knees, even when the ground is covered with snow, and the cold winds howling around them. In this posture, bowing their head to the earth, and crossing their breasts with fervour, they call upon the name of Christ, and humbly implore the charitable mite. If the passenger bestows this, the suppliant blesses him; if he refuses, he also blesses him.

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LETTER XXIV.

Soil of the Province of Ingria.—Present State of Agriculture.—Economy of the Peasantry.—Anecdotes of the Grand Duke Paul Petrovitsch—his Attempt to emancipate the Peasants.—German Colonies for the Improvement of Agriculture.—Anecdote of a Samoeide Member of the Russian Parliament.

Ingria, August 1790.

PERHAPS it is in every respect for the benefit of the Russian empire, that the capital is situated in a barren province. Petersburg acts upon the empire as a foreign country, and keeps the whole in motion, in supplying her demands.

The soil of Ingria is a white sandy clay, which is deemed the poorest of all the sorts of earths; yet here, by the kind provi-

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dence of nature, it is made to produce abundant crops, when properly cultivated. This flat country receives upon its bosom an even covering of snow during winter; and this, in the spring, melting, distributes moisture to the lands, with the same equality. But this snow now serving for manure, would prove the destroyer of the soil were the lands hilly. The thaw in spring would, in this case, occasion a run of water, which would carry along with it that moisture which the soil now retains, as well as its richest particles. Upon the other hand, were the soil of Ingria of a rich nature, this flat surface of the lands, when the snow melted, would reduce it to a mortar, and render it useless, since so short a summer's sun would not exhale the over-abundant moisture. The sandy soil drains itself, yet the flat surface of the land makes it retain a sufficient quantity of sap.

The rye harvest is finished: it is later this year than the last, owing to the wet season. Rye is the golden grain of the north: the peasants do not sow much of any other kind of corn. Of this grain they make their bread,

bread, and their drink too: ^{single} rye steeped in water gives them their favourite draught. The culture of their rye differs very little from that of the wheat in Britain; it is sown in autumn, after summer fallow. The winter snow protects it from the severity of the frost. Of oats and barley small quantities only are sown, and they are seldom reaped in a perfect state. The summer is short, and when attended, which it generally is, with heavy rains, the harvest is retarded. The oats and barley are then cut green, and dried in their barns with stoves as in the isles and highlands of Scotland. The rye, under the same circumstances, is treated in the same manner. The process is very simple: the grain, with its straw, is placed upon rafters in the barn, and a stove heated beneath them. A few hours only is requisite to dry the grain in so hot an oven, and a new quantity is brought, until the whole crop is dried. The Russian distillers use all sorts of grain. The oats are raised chiefly for their horses.

The poor people, in summer, cannot afford to live upon beef; and the fish, at this

season, are dearer, too, than in winter. The peasantry, as substitutes, use vegetables, especially the cucumber, which they eat with black bread. The cucumber peculiar to this climate is smaller than the English kind: it is cultivated in every garden, in vast quantities; and every cottage has a cucumber plantation belonging to it. They are now selling at five copics, or about two pence per hundred! The peasants either eat them when newly cut, or pickled; and one seldom sees a Russian in summer without a bit of black bread in one hand, and a cucumber in the other.

The pickled cucumber is prepared in this manner: a layer of oak leaves is first put in the bottom of a cask, then a layer of cucumbers, and so alternately, until the cask is filled. A pickle is then made in the common way, with salt and water (care being taken that it is not too strong), and poured into the cask over the cucumbers. It is only necessary to keep the cask in a cool cellar, and the cucumber is soon ready for use, and keeps twelve months, or longer, in good condition.

condition. Strangers do not, at first, relish this arctic pickle; yet they soon become fond of it, and eat it with all sorts of viands. I imagine, if a proportion of vinegar were added to the salt, this dish would be the more wholesome. The Russians, from their liking to salt messes, are very scorbutic in their habits.

The Russian and Finland peasants pickle other roots in the same way.

The cabbage is another grand article in the Russian œconomy. Large tubs are filled with this plant, cut down in small shreds; upon this cold water is poured, and the cabbage steeped until it sours: the water is then taken off, and the operation is completed. This is done in August and September, while the weather is yet warm enough to assist in the fermentation. The casks are put into cellars, and the cabbage is frozen during the cold weather, so that, when wanted for use, it must be cut with a hatchet. It must be thawed in cold water, and thereafter, a soup is made of it with meats.

Any kind of frozen substances put into

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warm water, or near any thing hot, instantly putrifies; and the Russians are very careful in the management of this winter provision, upon which they greatly depend.

The peasantry having laid in a proper quantity of rye meal, salted cucumber, and four cabbage, bid defiance to the nine months of winter. They procure, too, at this season, from the market, frozen fish and meat, in such quantities as their circumstances may permit. Their cattle are the worst provided for in the long dreary season, from October to May; and this is owing more to the laziness of the peasantry than to the want of a sufficient quantity of grass, if they would be at the trouble to cut it in due time, and to lay it up in the same good order that they do their own provisions.

The peasants not only make preparations of cabbage for their own consumption, but for that of the great towns. It is common to see several hundred sledges, with as many tubs of four cabbage, driven to Petersburg. The boors, in returning from town, seat themselves in the tubs, and look like so many disciples of Diogenes.

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Every peasant is allowed a certain portion of land for the purpose of agriculture, and a considerable space of woodland is granted to the villagers, in common, for feeding their herds and flocks, and to supply winter provender for the beastial. They pay their lords in money and in service; sometimes partly in grain. The exactions of the lords are arbitrary. The Russians and Fins are both of them very indolent farmers; yet, the first are as lively and active, as the others are naturally dull and sluggish. The Russians, naturally spirited and quick in all their passions, are not well calculated to wait the slow returns of harvest; and the want of population, in a wide fertile country, is unfavourable to exertion.

The hot stoves would of themselves occasion all their indolence, did no other cause exist; and their lively tempers, that must be employed in some way, make them drunkards. They do not drink to warm themselves because they are cold, or to drown melancholy because they are slaves; but to occupy, nourish, heighten, and prolong the natural ardour and vivacity of their minds.

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The Tongusian hunters suffer more cold than any people, and they are the soberest of any. The lower order of Englishmen drink as much as those of Russia, only they differ in their manner of drinking.—The Russian swallows as much at once as serves him for some hours; the Englishman sips continually, and talks politics over his bottle. Now, it is wonderful that the Russians should drink because they are slaves, and Britons because they are free! A Briton should never get drunk, lest he forget, but for a moment, that he is free; or have wild ideas, instead of sober reality.

I do not pretend to say, that freedom and security of property are inimical to industry; they are the parents of industry and every noble exertion. But I will prove that, were the Russians at this moment free, they would be less industrious, and have more vices than they have at present, if that freedom were given them before they are prepared for it.

I will content myself just now with giving one or two glaring instances of the stubbornness of ignorance,

Slaves

Slaves will complain of hardships, and pant after liberty, without knowing their incapacity for enjoying freedom. It is only for those, who are capable of freedom, that we should be sorry if they remain in a state of bondage! The complaints of the peasantry, upon some estates of the Grand Duke, reached his Highness. He ordered them to be put upon the same footing with English farmers, exacting a trifling rent, providing them with every implement of husbandry, and giving them instructors to teach them agriculture. The peasants made shift to sell their new property, and drink the value in the course of two years: they failed to pay even the trifling stipulated rent, and petitioned to be put upon their old establishment.

The new code of laws, before it was published, was reported to contain a very strange kind of freedom; and the more distant from the metropolis, the more ridiculous were the notions entertained of that freedom. The peasantry were impressed with an idea, that they were to have the *freedom of enslaving*

ing their lords, or to force them to do whatever they required ; and they began to put the *law* in execution, by murdering several proprietors of estates.

The Russians are a fine people, but they are not yet ripe for freedom. Their sovereigns are doing every thing in their power to prepare them for liberty, by inuring them to industry and good habits ; and this is all that the sober and wise advocates for liberty can wish for. There are many instances of the unnecessary oppression of the peasantry ; but this is neither the fault of the sovereign nor of the proprietors, farther than that the proprietors should be more careful than they sometimes are, in appointing overseers on their estates. These are the tyrants who bring odium upon government, and upon the Russian nobles ; and there should be some regulations adopted, to prevent men without character or feeling, from having it in their power to disgrace their country. But while we allow these evils to exist, it will easily occur, that so sensible a people as the Russians, yet untaught,

taught, and having passions of consequence wild and furious, are not yet to be kept under, but by a steady, and even a severe hand.

I have witnessed the dismissal of tyrannical overseers of land, on several occasions. When the proprietors know of the evil, it is their interest to cure it. Both lord and peasant ought to be the happiest people upon the earth. Russia is extensive and fruitful, and the taxes, in times of peace, very moderate. The natives are capable of every improvement in arts and science. Time will remove temporary advantages which all other nations have had in their turn.

In the province of Ingria, and in the neighbourhood of Petersburg, are colonies of German farmers, formerly established by her Imperial Majesty. Their farms are proofs of what industry can effect even in the latitude of 60 deg. They raise very fine rye crops, and they supply the metropolis with all sorts of vegetables, as cabbages, carrots, turnips, potatoes, &c. The adjacent

cent city gives them plenty of manure, of which they use too much. They seem to consider the quantity, rather than the quality of their crops; and the potatoes in particular, which should be excellent in a sandy soil, are spoiled by the heaps of manure thrown upon the land. This is very much to be regretted, as this root would be a more wholesome food for the natives than their salted cucumbers; and it might gradually draw off their taste for that excess of raw vegetables which they devour continually. Those German colonies are established in many other parts of the empire, and their example will, in time, excite the Russian peasants to follow agriculture with more attention and industry.

But the Russian, with every local evil and disadvantage, is inactive only in affairs of agriculture: in trade he is a very different person; and from this I am very apt to think that their property is not so insecure as some, who are more attentive to the names of liberty and vassalage than to matters of fact, would persuade us. Nor are his
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greater exertions in trade than in agriculture occasioned by a taste for the pleasures of luxury. The Russian trader, as yet, deals in luxuries without tasting them, brandy always excepted; his only object being to gain money. The new code of laws has put the people upon a very different footing from what they were on formerly; and the natives, when employed in trade, or other concerns which demand quick application, and are attended with quick returns of profit, do not appear to be afraid of getting rich. It is diverting to hear the two accounts given of the Russians, by those at one thousand miles distance: the sage philosopher in his closet—and the mercantile foreigner who resides in Russia. The first, oppressing the natives with chains and knouts, and every load of misery and woe, renders them stupid, sullen, and careless; the second complains, that the natives are as sharp as himself, and that very little advantage can be got over them in any dealings; but on the contrary, that the Russians have no aversion to over-reaching when in their power;

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and as they do this in a less polite and sly manner than polished nations, the proofs against them are clearer, and the complaints louder than they might be otherwise.

In forming the new code of laws, her Imperial majesty summoned, from every part of the empire, deputies to assist her councils. When the Samoeide deputies came in their turn to be questioned in regard to what new regulations were necessary in their country, they replied, "that they had few laws, and did not require more; that if any one put another to death, he, likewise, was punished with death." they were asked "if they had no other criminals amongst them—no thieves, no adulterers?" They answered, "that there were such among them." "What then," rejoined their interrogators, "are the punishments annexed to the crimes of theft and adultery?" "What!" said one of the reverend deputies, starting with surprise, "is not detection a sufficient punishment!"

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LETTER XXV.

Customs and Manners of the Finlanders.—Contrast of Character between the Russians and Finlanders.—Character of the Russians.—Native Politeness and Goodnature.—Anecdote of a Russian Soldier—of a Russian Sheriff.

Ingria, November 1790.

NO two nations differ more from each other than the Russians and Finlanders. The former are as active, acute, and sensible, as the latter are flow, heavy, and stupid. Both are nearly in the same situation in regard to freedom, or rather in regard to slavery: both are under the same climate. This proves that there is a difference in the very nature of men, which neither local situation nor climate is able wholly to eradicate.

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The poor Finlanders, tossed about from one master to another, hardly know to whom they belong: the Russians, as their conquerors, claim the superiority; and a Russian peasant, in comparison with the Finlander, deems himself a gentleman. The apparent slowness and stupidity of the Finlanders may be partly occasioned by a degrading treatment. My proposal of removing them to the province of the Ukraine, would put this numerous and industrious nation more upon a level with the Russians; and, if they actually possess abilities, a situation more independent will bring them forth. This plan would be of great service to the Russians. The contemplation of a people so much inferior to them, as the Finlanders are at present, leads them to suppose themselves more accomplished in manners and arts, than the world is yet willing to allow them to be.

Civilization is best promoted by example. The best books of laws, manners, and sciences, sent among uncivilized nations, translated into their native language, would hardly
excite

excite their notice; or, if they did, probably their contempt or derision. But when foreign nations mix with them, when they see theory reduced to practice, and the superior wealth of the strangers, they begin to exert themselves to equal the others in arts, which they are now convinced is the sure road to affluence. The British nation is copied by all others, because it is the richest; which naturally makes foreign nations conclude that those arts which procure superior riches, are themselves superior to the arts of other states.

When the Russians see the wealth of a people, whom they at present despise, increased by means of industry, and the adoption of arts common to both; when they find the Finlanders approaching to equality with themselves, they will be convinced of the necessity of adopting the arts and sciences of foreign nations in order to maintain their boasted pre-eminence over the Finlanders. The Russians have already the example of foreign nations; but they have not long had it, and that only from a

few as yet resident with them; and when their pride as well as their interest is brought into play, their motions and improvements will be more rapid. The Finlander, situated as he is, remains quiet, and cautious of giving any offence; this caution and quietness have produced in him a considerable share of low cunning. I do not recollect to have seen a Finlander in a passion: low murmurs are the utmost stretch of their feelings. A Russian, though he does not repel, shrinks from insult, and gives vent, the first opportunity, to his curses, when his tyrant is out of hearing, but without paying any regard who may hear him beside. In this instance he resembles a woman: he makes up in words, what he dares not in blows; and frequently, too, his tears are summoned to the aid of his speech. The tears of a Russian start from him indignantly, and give even a greater manliness to his looks. A Finlander hangs his head, weeps, whines, and complains like a child.

The Finlander being deemed, and even
deeming himself, inferior to the Russian,
copies

copies after him in manners, but particularly in wearing the beard: and no doubt he means this too as a disguise, to lose, in dress and manners, the odious distinction which otherwise would fall more severely upon him.

Their religion does not enjoin wearing the beard, and it must certainly be for the purposes I have already hinted at, that the Finlander wears it. Those of this nation who still remain under the Swedish government, universally shave the beard. The Russians, emigrants from finer climates, add the sheep-skin to their other clothes in winter. The Finlanders, the natives of the polar regions, are more hardy in this respect. A Finlander seldom wears the sheep-skin, though his dress be, in other respects, nearly similar to the Russian; it consists of a coarse pair of linen drawers, which serve both for breeches and stockings. Their legs are wrapped, besides, with pieces of linen or woollen stuff, rolled about with straw ropes; and they have straw shoes upon their feet. Their coat is of coarse

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woollen

woollen stuff, of a dark brown or white colour, made without regard to shape, and is tied round the body with a band.

The Fin's beard defends the lower part of his face, and a fur cap his head, from the cold; and he ties a handkerchief round his neck. The Russian's dress differs from this chiefly in his exposing his neck to cold and heat, and wearing leather boots instead of straw stockings. I have observed that the Finlanders, in one instance, seeming to forget their desire of blending themselves with Russians, wear universally a red cape to their coats. But let a Finlander be ever so near in dress to the Russians, I can pick him out from among the crowd of the latter: not only his locks betray him, but his inanimate figure, which seems to move by outward rather than inward impulse. White locks, common to the Danes, the Norwegians, the Swedes, and Finlanders, prove them the most antient inhabitants of the countries they now live in, and probably of the same origin. I do not understand much either of the Finland or the Swedish dialect; but, if
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my ears do not deceive me, they are nearly similar, not only in many of the words, but in the manner of speaking: both people have a plaintive tone in their pronunciation.

The Finlander imitates with success the dress of the Russians; a stranger is not sensible of the difference between the two people: he finds great difficulties, however, in his attempt to be as cheerful as his conquerors. A Russian sings from morning till night, unless when he is paying away money. A Finlander never tunes his throat, unless when he is drunk, and then he roars, without regard to music: he catches, perhaps, a tune from some passing Russian, but he forgets it again in a few minutes. I wondered, at my first arrival here, to hear such a mixture of good and bad music upon the highways. I now find who were the *base* performers. A Finlander pulls off his hat to every person who appears like a gentleman: a Russian seldom, unless to his brothers in sheep-skins.

The Finland women are extremely coarse in their persons and features. They wear

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a strange kind of dress, ornamented with embroidery of different coloured threads, and hung in every corner with glass beads, which are even wrought into the cloth. They are even fond too of gold and silver ornaments, and have each a silver gorget upon their breasts; but this is their holiday dress; in ordinary, it differs little from that of the men. The married women tie up their hair, and wear upon their heads a small hood of linen; the unmarried women allow their hair to fall upon their shoulders, and have sometimes a gaudy head-dress, composed of a bit of pasteboard or other stiff substance, studded with beads, or sparkling with lace. This last piece of finery encircles but does not cover their heads. In this last article of dress they appear to have copied after the Russian females, whose habits, I have already observed, bear a strong resemblance to that of the women in the highlands of Scotland; yet the dress of the Russian men does not, in the smallest degree, resemble that of the Highlander: indeed, neither of them wear breeches; but the
Russian

Russian long trowsers have no similarity to the philibeg. The dress of the Russian is long, flowing, and warm.—The highlander's, the plaid excepted, short and scanty.

The inhabitants in many countries under the line, are not more tawny than the Finland men and women, at an advanced, and even at a middle period of life. The extreme cold of the polar winter, not less than the hot stoves and baths, and the sultry summer, produces this effect, with the assistance of their dirty habits. The Russians, particularly the women, have a spirit of cleanliness, in defiance of their general customs, which are inconsistent with it. But the Finlanders, when old, retire as it were amidst filth itself; their forms are encrusted with nastiness; and indeed the human form, amongst them, is nearly lost. When young, their colour is rather delicate; their snowy hair spreads upon their shoulders, and they would seem to promise more agreeable persons in old age. The Russians have dark hair and complexions from infancy, though many of the Russian women have not only fair

fair complexions, but delicate shapes, which, added to their enchanting demeanour, render them irresistibly charming.

Beauty among the Finlanders is rarely found. I have nevertheless seen some perfect models of beauty among the females, which their awkward manner and dress could not hide; for the Finland ladies have not the native politeness of the Russian, and when they are polite, their politeness is copied from the latter. I have in vain attempted to discover what the Finlander inherits from nature, unless a soft disposition, which is entirely moulded by the actions of those causes already mentioned.

I find no difficulty in drawing the portrait of the Russian: he inherits a soul that darts its light through the mist, which hides rather than mixes with it. I have before taken notice of the inclination of the Russians for fun and merriment. They catch at every ludicrous circumstance; but I never saw a people so goodnatured, and so polite withal. A Russian laughs, if it appears to him that you wish to make him laugh; and every

every peasant contrives to excite laughter in his neighbour: but they seldom laugh at any incident, however ludicrous, if it is occasioned by mistake, and particularly if the mistake is attended with any uneasy circumstances to the person who makes it. I have often admired their behaviour to foreigners who attempted to speak the Russian language. In many other nations, and most I believe among our own countrymen, nothing affords such diversion as the blunders committed by strangers in speaking their language, and even in companies who wish to be esteemed polite. A Russian boor, if addressed by a stranger, looks anxiously at him, and is uneasy for his errors; he encourages you to make signs, to assist him in guessing your meaning; he even instructs you to make them; and having guessed your meaning, which he does very quickly, he is very happy, and flies to procure what you want. A Russian is not so quick in understanding his native language, when he is desired to do what he knows he will be forced to do. He is, at that time,

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as slow and stupid as a Finlander. But where he knows he is to procure thanks, and, in many instances, when he can expect nothing but thanks, he is fond of obliging. A Russian accustomed to obey, is equally fond of being obeyed, when he is in the least degree in authority, or where he is certain of being in the right.

It will appear strange to you, who have heard nothing from Russia but sounds of dungeons, chains, and knouts, to read these new sketches of their customs and character, which I do assure you are drawn from life; and their vices and virtues, their faults and excellencies, recorded as they occurred to my observation.

A Russian coachman, some time last summer, drove me into the capital: a retinue of some great man was coming from it, and, keeping upon the left hand side of the road, my coachman called out to the postillion to keep to the right: the road was the best to the left; so that the great man's postillions, trusting that their magnificent show would awe us into complaisance, kept their ground; my

my coachman poured upon them a volley of oaths; the postillions drove to the other side; the great man stared, and perhaps mistook me for another great man from the impudence of my servant. We passed to windward of this nobleman and his suite, and involved the orders of St. George and St. Waldemar in a cloud of dust. I reprimanded the coachman for behaving so insolently. He repeated his oaths, and said, "that every person should keep to the right hand," and then continued his song.

I was much pleased lately with the behaviour of a soldier of a Russian regiment which, in their march, halted in our neighbourhood, in order to procure fresh horses for their baggage waggons. The sheriff of the district, who is a god among the peasantry, arrived at the post-house, and sent his starosts or messengers into the villages to find a supply of cattle and boors. The corporal of the advanced guard complained that the number brought in was not sufficient. The sheriff told him, " that he would order him to be tied and whipped, if he dared to give direc-

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"tions or opinions." The son of Mars, in one of corporal Trim's attitudes, replied sharply, "that he had a title to speak." The sheriff asked him, "if he knew whom he talked to?" "Yes," said the corporal, "it is your duty to collect horses, and mine to see that the number is sufficient for our company." The sheriff stormed, and, bestowing the accustomary oaths, repeated the various dignities of his office. The corporal asserted, "that he was as good as him; that he was a soldier, had fought for his country, and was bound to obey his officers only." The magistrate and captain lowered his tone, though he was more than half seas over. But that he might keep up his authority and respect among the peasantry, who had listened to the dispute, he ordered two or three of them to be whipped, under pretence of their having been dilatory in coming up with their cavalry. I witnessed this whipping. I had never seen the operation before in Russia by public sentence. If the execution is always so gentle as it was in the

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present

present case, too much has been said about it by travellers. The peasants, one after the other, placed upon their hands and knees, received a few strokes from the starost, with a small wand, upon their backs. The deputy sheriff, or lieutenant, is a German nobleman, a man of the most polite and gentle manners, very unfit for his present post, but very capable of a better and more exalted rank. He avoids assuming his titles. The Finland peasants have no respect for him, as he seldom orders them to be beat. They are not like the Russian peasants, sensible of favours of this nature: yet, to say truth, both of them require to be kept in order by a strict hand: the Russian is very sensible of obligations and kind usage; but he is apt to abuse favour, and form expectations incompatible with his present situation. He has, as yet, no idea of the nature of freedom, otherwise than that it is permission to do every thing without the fear of blows.

The deputy sheriff shrinks when he is under the necessity of ordering punishment; he

he does not seem to think the punishment unnecessary, but his gentle soul regrets that he must see the execution of justice.

He lives in a small wooden house at Oranienbaum with an old mother and a sister. His pay does not exceed 50l. a year; yet he appears cheerful, and struggles to conceal his sorrows from the world. His brother officers complain, that they cannot trust him in any matter that requires a severe executioner.

LETTER XXVI.

Russian Climate.—Of the hot and cold Baths, their ill Effects upon the Constitution of the Natives.—The Russians enabled to bear Cold by warm Furs alone.—Physical and moral Effects of the Baths.

Ingria, Jan. 1791.

MANKIND were first placed in a fine climate: they have to this day an aversion to burning suns and chilling frosts; nor do I believe that they made choice of these latitudes where the extremes are felt, particularly of cold, or that any necessity would have driven them to the poles. I rather imagine that the climates have altered, and that a gradual alteration in these, has reconciled the inhabitants to rigours otherwise unsupportable.

It may be urged, Why are not other animals as well as man found here, the same as in other countries, and for the same reasons?

It has been nearly proved by naturalists,

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that the elephant, now only found in warm latitudes, was once a native of Siberia. That the animals of warm and hot climates do not now exist in the north, may be owing to the want of those resources against cold, which the ingenuity of men found out.

I think I view the sagacious monarch of the woods retiring with slow and sullen steps from the northern deserts—hear him growling with agony as he ascends the mountains of Tibet, and casting back a wishful eye to his native plains!

A celebrated writer (Mr. Pallas) has given up his former opinion regarding the existence of the elephant in Siberia; and now thinks, from the situation in which their bones are found, that the flood has washed them thither from India, after the animals had been destroyed. The marine strata covering these bones, no doubt prove, too, that these animals were not natives of Siberia. Is it not possible that they may have been drowned here as well as in India?

Whether the generations of the north have made choice of their situation or no, they seem to be well pleased with it; for
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they are always singing or dancing, when they are not eating and drinking, or sleeping.

It is a generally received opinion, that the hot and cold baths used by the northern nations harden and steel their constitutions against the severity of the climate; and the writers upon the northern climates tell us, that the human body, by plunging from the hot to the cold bath, is tempered like iron: but, perhaps, what may temper iron may not temper flesh and blood.

The rapid change from summer to winter, the only seasons they know, they rehearse upon their bodies, by plunging from the hot to the cold baths; like criminals, who, doomed to receive yearly a cruel flogging, daily flog themselves to harden their backs.

I apprehend, however, from some little knowledge of the people, that these human furnaces, and ice cellars, have a contrary tendency. Nature hates extremes; nor is it to be brought by violent, but by slow degrees to endure them. The hardness acquired is only artificial, and consists merely in suffering an operation with ease, which others could not bear at all.

The quick transitions of the northern climate form themselves a natural bath. It might be more prudent to endeavour to evade the foe, than to brave him.

A bath moderately heated in winter, is absolutely necessary in Russia, to preserve health; and, what is very much connected with health, to preserve cleanliness. The natives content themselves with boiling and freezing their bodies once a week; and, trusting to this ablution, they care not how dirty they are for the remainder of it. In fact, the baths, as they now use them, occasion dirtier habits than if they never used them; for, in this case, they might find the necessity of wearing clean linen, and other parts of dress, as well as of washing their hands and faces; and the heat of summer would drive them into the rivers.

The cooling stream, so much celebrated by all nations for the purposes of health, has no charms in the eyes of a Russian: he uses it indeed, but in an unnatural way. The stoves in the houses of the common people, are always heated to a degree little short of that of the hot bath, without regard

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to the season; and, unless when the trial of hardihood comes on, they are in a constant stew.

They set cold and heat at defiance in the baths, and yet never go without doors in cold weather, unless when wrapped up in furs, which enables foreigners to go out too, as well as the natives. Now, if the Russian cannot bear cold with less clothing than foreigners, does not this prove the inefficacy of the baths? Nay, foreigners bear with more cold than the Russians, and with a dress less warm, at their first arrival here, and until their constitutions are weakened by the use of stoves, ill regulated in their heat.

The sheep-skin is of vast service to the back of a Russian. It is this, not he, that withstands the rigour of the climate; his very face is defended by a shaggy beard.

I am far from meaning to insinuate that the Russians are not of a hardy race; I only lament that they hurt a natural strength and vigour of body, by using unnatural methods to increase them. The children of the Russians chiefly are to be admired for undergoing the trial of the hot and cold bath; many however fall victims to this infernal practice.

practice. A few months use to those who pass the ordeal, reconciles them to it: a few years use renders the bath necessary to their existence; and at last it becomes their greatest luxury—as among the higher classes of men to eat and drink substances of the hottest nature, and then to swallow ice creams to cool their burning stomachs. Nature at first rejects these poisons; but at last yields, and even grows fond of her destroyer.

The eyes of a Russian gladden with rapture when he speaks of the bagnio; it is his *ne plus ultra* of mortal bliss. In the hot bath they are treated nearly in the same voluptuous manner as in the baths of Asia, from which quarter, indeed, all their customs seem to originate; but with this difference in favour of sensuality in Russia, that the lower ranks sometimes bathe together promiscuously.

Before I ventured to trust to my own observations concerning the effect of the hot and cold baths, I made particular enquiry among the most intelligent of the natives. They confessed that the immoderate use of the bath occasioned several diseases: they particularly mentioned the rheumatism. Mr.

Pallas,

Pallas, in a conversation which I had with him upon this subject, corroborated this opinion. It is well known that the natives are soon cut off by illness, which I attribute to those baths. All violent remedies have the effect of making us appear unexhausted to the last moment : all nature is exhausted to force symptoms of life : but the moment arrives when every fibre breaks, as at the signal of death, and down they are hurried to the grave. A Russian has no fear of consequences : he has little fear of any kind; and whatever happens, they say, as in Asia, "It is the will of God!" When winter or when summer approaches, they only bring to their recollection what dress, what holidays, or what work is peculiar to the season. They face, unconcernedly, heat or cold, yet prefer warmth; and would seem to encounter wintry storms with the greater boldness, as they renew the pleasure of a return to their cabins.

The face of a Russian is defended by a shaggy beard; and those who shave, tie a napkin round their cheeks in cold weather. From this custom the Russians might be called

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effeminate ; as they are called hardy, from going with their necks bare. In both cases we recognize the influence of custom.

The Russian recruit, taken from his warm hut and sheep-skin, is in winter the most pitiable creature upon earth. I have seen them frequently trembling in their march through the streets, and hardly able to hold their muskets ; while their countrymen, dressed in furs, were walking about at their ease. The soldier uses the baths, but the virtue of these does not appear *unless under a sheep-skin* : and he would prefer his old dress to all the baths in Russia. This cruel treatment of the army must occasion the death of thousands annually. Could there be the least impropriety in giving them a winter dress, lined with fur ? though this might not be well adapted for regiments marching against an enemy. Winter is a time when Russia will seldom be troubled with any attack. Nothing can withstand this rigorous climate but warm furs ; and any attempt to do it in another manner would sacrifice millions of lives. Humanity, as well

well as the best policy, calls upon the Russian government to give a warmer dress to the soldiers in winter.

Early in summer, when the weather is no way intemperate, either in respect of heat or cold, the Russians feel the approach of the evening, and quickly bury themselves in fur, while foreigners are walking about in a slight dress. In truth, the latter are too careless in this respect, and the former if possible too careful.

At the beginning and at the close of summer, this climate is liable to very sudden transitions in the course of a few hours, and requires attention to proper clothing. The violent use of the hot and cold baths makes the bulk of Russians sickly; they have not the appearance of health: the women, in a greater degree than the men, have in their appearance every mark of debility and old age. Neither the one nor the other have that firmness of flesh, that florid colour, that belong to the lower ranks of the English. The Russian women endeavour to make up for these by painting their faces

—a practice universal amongst them, from the Princess to the cinder-wench.

It is perhaps superfluous to observe, that those who, by the nature of their occupations, are most exposed to the cold, and have constant exercises, enjoy the best health: as the street lhwosicks or coachmen, who are not much in their houses, and whose employment does not admit of their dozing like others, and sweating away their existence.

The moral effects arising from the violent use of the hot and cold baths, are as injurious to virtue and happiness as their physical operation is to bodily health.

The preservation of beauty and of health in women, preserves virtue in men. So soon as they lose these, they are no longer the enchanting objects of desire. The principle of pleasure is destroyed by the warm baths—at the same time that they nurture lascivious inclinations, and early prostitution. Hence indifference, inattention, disgust, and many crimes disgraceful to human nature.

L E T.

LETTER XXVII.

Anecdote of M. Plestcheyeff.—General Description of the Russian Empire, its Produce and Commerce.—The British Commerce with Russia ill conducted—Proposal for transplanting the whole Nation of Finlanders to the Ukraine.—Population of Russia.—Distinction of Ranks.

St. Petersburg, February 1791.

I HAVE just returned from a visit to M. Plestcheyeff, one of the bravest officers, politest gentlemen, and accomplished scholars, in this part of the world. Plestcheyeff told me that he was for seven years on board the British fleet, and latterly held the rank of Lieutenant.

A picture in this gentleman's drawing-room

room attracted my attention : it was the loss of the Centaur on her passage from the West Indies to England. Monsieur Plestcheyeff noticed several officers in the boat : " These," said he, " I am well acquainted with." He mentioned their names, and particularly Captain Inglefield.

Monf. Plestcheyeff is the author of a geographical account of the Russian Empire, dedicated by permission to Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess. It contains a very exact account of all the provinces, their extent, produce, &c. As we have no book in our language which treats of this subject, and as none are more capable, or could have written with greater accuracy than Monf. Plestcheyeff, I should wish to see a translation of this work into English. This world of empire extends from the Dwina and Nieper, its western boundaries, to Kamtschatka and the eastern ocean, a length of four thousand miles, and, from the arctic pole to the Euxine and the Caspian seas, embraces one fourth part of the circumference of the globe. It has every
variety

variety of climate, and is inhabited by every variety of nations to be found in the old world, except the African *. Upon the coasts of the northern seas, frozen during nine months of the year, the Laplanders, the Samoeides, the Ostiaks, and various other tribes, dwell in tents and caves, little removed in civili-

* According to Linnæus, Buffon, and other naturalists, there are of mankind six different divisions, or species:

The first, in the order of their enumeration, is found under the polar regions, and comprehends the Laplanders, the Esquimaux Indians, the Samoied Tartars, the Nova Zemblians, Borandians, Greenlanders, and the people of Kamtschatka.

The second, the Tartar race, comprehending the Chinese and Japanese.

The third, the Southern Asiatics, or natives of India.

The fourth, the natives of Africa.

The fifth, the native inhabitants of America.

The sixth, the Europeans.

It is needless to observe, that of these, and all the subordinate varieties or divisions of nations, there has been a great intermixture: and distinctions, physical as well as moral, seem gradually, in some measure, to vanish before the progress of commerce, arts, and sciences.

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zation from the brute creation: beyond these, towards the north, life itself goes out: the islands in the northern ocean are uninhabitable. The Siberians, a mixture of Fins and Tartars, inhabit the northern and middle regions of the Muscovite dominions in Asia. Their country is in many places fruitful; but as no part of it borders upon a navigable sea, its productions are of less value, and the people little known. The iron and furs of Siberia are the only articles which the Russian merchant finds as yet capable of bearing the expence of so long a conveyance to his warehouses at Petersburg.

The rivers of Siberia communicate with the Wolga; the Wolga, by lesser rivers and canals, with the Neva; but notwithstanding this convenience of water carriage, the vast distance renders it impracticable to bring any other but the most valuable articles of commerce to the ports upon the Baltic. The southern parts of Asiatic Russia are, in a proportionate degree, more fruitful than the middle provinces; but they labour under

under the same disadvantages in point of commercial intercourse.

Siberia, with all these local inconveniences, while her iron mines remain unexhausted, is an invaluable acquisition to Russia; and is a strong barrier to the encroachments of the Chinese and Tartars. The Russian government is put to little expence in defending this barrier: a few small forts, garrisoned by irregular troops from among the Cossacs, who chiefly support themselves in fruitful and thinly inhabited plains, are at all times equal to the defence of this frontier.

Siberia is watered by many fine and navigable rivers, which afford a plentiful supply of fish to the natives; but as their streams run towards the north, they are not attended with the advantage of a communication with a navigable sea.

European Russia has the Wolga upon the east, the Caspian and Black seas upon the south, the Nieper and Dwina, before mentioned, and the Baltic to the south and west. The Wolga, rising in the centre of this empire,

pire, receiving in its course many rivers running from the Asiatic as well as the European provinces, and discharging itself into the Caspian sea, lays open to the Russian merchants India and Persia. The Nieper and Dwina have their sources in White Russia, formerly a part of the kingdom of Poland. The Nieper empties his stream into the Black sea, and from thence the navigation into every country bordering upon the Mediterranean is short and easy. The Dwina, taking a contrary direction, runs into the Baltic, and with equal convenience opens a communication with France, Britain, Holland, and all the northern parts of Europe. It is to be remarked too, that these rivers have their sources in the most fertile provinces, as they visit the richest in their long course towards the east, south, and west, inviting the Russians to industry, to agriculture and commerce.

The most considerable portion of this immense territory, in which are included the kingdoms of Kioff, Moscow, Twere, and Novogorod; the province of the Crimea,

mea, the Ukraine, Little and White Russias, and Livonia, is in the highest degree fertile, producing every species of corn, flax, hemp, and timber; from which last article tar is extracted: and from the better kinds is supplied that vast export of deal boards and masts from Petersburg, Wyburg, Narva, and Riga. These, and other species of Russian produce, employ yearly 1,000 sail of British shipping continually in exporting them. As yet we have only had samples of the produce of Russia.—Two thousand sail of British vessels may yet be employed in it; and several hundreds, perhaps thousands more of British factors, merchants, and others, may be profitably and usefully engaged, as well at the Russian sea-ports, as at the inland mercantile cities. I will illustrate this subject, when I come more particularly to treat of the Russian commerce. The few factors we have yet in this immense empire—their wealth, their consequent pride and obstinacy, have the effect of making the British importer pay upwards of 20 per cent. higher for his

VOL. I. Y goods,

goods, than if no such monopoly existed; besides subjecting our commerce with Russia to numberless inconveniences, and even creating misunderstandings between the English and Russians here, and likewise between the two courts.

The numerous herds, particularly of the Ukraine, supply the great quantities of tallow annually imported into Britain and other parts. So plentiful are provisions in the Ukraine, that it is a common practice to kill bullocks, merely to obtain their hides and fat, which is procured by squeezing the whole carcase in a machine constructed for the purpose. What remains in the machine, after this operation, is thrown away, or used as manure. But indeed this paradise is so thinly peopled, that the farmers are not always at the trouble of spreading manure: they prefer removing to a new spot, which the plough has not yet torn, and has been rendered fertile by the rotting of successive crops of tall grass for centuries. The herds, although numerous, are unable to consume one fiftieth part of the rich,

rich clover produced in every spot ; and it is trodden under foot, or set on fire, by vagrant hordes, or by indolent husbandmen.

A celebrated writer recommends to the Russian government, to people the Ukraine by transplanting thither the natives of the frozen shores of Siberia ; “ which,” says he, “ are of no service either to themselves or “ to mankind in their present situation.”

Experience has proved that the northern are, of all nations, the most attached to their country ; and of all northern nations, the barbarous Laplander, and the inhabitants of the northern parts of Siberia, feel this *amor patriæ* the strongest. They cannot exist out of their native deserts. Every individual among them, who had been brought away by order of the Danish, Swedish, or Russian governments, actually died of grief. The most gentle treatment, the most flattering distinctions seemed to have no other effect, than to raise in their minds a sad contrast between luxury and politeness on the one hand, and rough but innocent homeliness on the other. Why then envy them their icy
Y 2 mountains

mountains and inclement skies? Nor is it good philosophy to force them from all that makes them happy, though it were not attended with such fatal consequences. The only method to effect that plan, would be the cruel policy of depriving the parents of their children before they had yet imbibed a love of kindred, or their country. Might it not be better to transplant the whole nation of Finlanders from the shores of the Baltic? a nation already accustomed to agriculture, naturally industrious, and of dispositions the very reverse of those of the more northern hordes, which make them abhor the idea of altering their simple, indolent manner of life. From what I know of the Finlanders, they might be easily prevailed upon to part with their rocks and sand for the rich soil of the Ukraine.

It is true that Russia, bound by former treaties to Sweden, cannot remove the Finlanders, without breaking through such treaties: but they have made war upon each other, contrary to those treaties; and to remove the Finlanders to the Ukraine, would

would be the most reasonable breach of faith that ever Russia, or Sweden, or any other potentate or power, committed. The inclination of the Finlanders to agriculture, would make them prefer a country where they could live, to one where they may starve. Had they no inclination to agriculture, it would be as difficult to transplant them as to transplant the Ostiaks. The execution of this plan would, besides, answer a grand political purpose—the Finlanders are attached to the Swedes, from similarity in religion, and from being formerly the subjects of Sweden: Russia therefore, by sending the Fins to a better country, and replacing them with Russians, would strengthen her frontier, and likewise relieve the poor Finlanders from that jealousy and ill usage which they now suffer from petty tyrants in office, particularly in the time of war between Russia and Sweden.

It might, besides, banish every idea which Sweden does, or may entertain with regard to the recovery of Finland in Russia, and thereby prevent those contests which may henceforth originate from such ideas.

The Russian empire in Europe, consisting of the kingdoms and provinces enumerated, and situated for the most part in the best climates, is considerably larger than any other in this quarter of the globe, and daily increasing in agriculture, population and commerce.

The population of Russia, according to the last review and survey, which was taken in 1788, amounted to upwards of twenty-one millions of souls: of which population the following is a

T A B L E.

Inhabitants liable to the poll tax	18,000,000
— In the conquered provinces	1,200,000
Nobles — — —	70,000
Clergy, secular and regular —	60,000
Soldiers and sailors —	570,000
Employed in administration and tribunals — — —	28,000
Ukraine, Siberia, and the Cossacks	900,000
Crimea and Cuban —	860,000
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Total of the population	21,688,000
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The whole subjects of Russia are divided into four classes : first, that of the great and small nobility ; secondly, the clergy ; thirdly, the merchants, burgeses, and other free persons ; and fourthly, the peasants. The three first classes comprehend the free subjects of the Empire : the fourth, the bondmen or slaves.

In almost all oriental governments, there is little or no distinction of rank among the nobles, except what they derive from offices and honours conferred immediately by their sovereign. Accordingly, in Russia, the oldest sons of persons raised to the first dignities have no prerogatives arising from their birth. The grandeur of a family is, as it were, annihilated at the death of its chief ; because fortunes are divided equally among the sons : and with regard to the titles that are hereditary, these give no dignity or consequence, without the concomitant favour of the sovereign. Thus the right of succession by gavel-kind, that in America and other countries is considered as one of the greatest bulwarks of equality and freedom,

is in Russia, as well as Turkey and other despotic governments, one of the principal pillars of tyranny. For an hereditary nobility, accumulating wealth and consequence from generation to generation, could not but be formidable to any throne; and might easily, by their combinations in the case of minorities, or on other occasions, shake it from the foundations.

As a constitutional qualification for holding an office in the Russian government, a person must be enrolled and have a kind of political existence in one of the fourteen classes, called *civil classes*, all of which suppose a military gradation: for in Russia, and in all despotic governments, the sovereign power is altogether military. The Russian courtiers are always supposed to make a part of the three first classes. It would be tedious to enumerate all the different classes, which descend in degrees and respectability until we come to the fourteenth and last, which comprehends the court pages, a description of men analogous to our low and petti-

pettifogging attornies, and the lowest subalterns among the sailors and soldiers.—After all this classification, there does not seem to be, in Russia, any description of people of any political and permanent existence besides the nobles. To this order the present Empress has granted, besides the rights conferred on them by Peter IV. new privileges, viz. 1. A preference in military promotion. 2. A preference of reception into military schools. 3. The right of buying and selling lands. 4. The exclusive privilege of erections for the distillation and sale of brandies. The nobles, on their estates, have an authority almost absolute, and dispose of their slaves according to their pleasure. They cannot indeed sentence them to death: but they may carry punishments to the length of mortal consequences, if death do not follow the punishments they inflict in the course of three days.—The second order is the clergy, formerly with a patriarch at their head. Peter the Great, finding the patriarch to be a dignitary of too much authority, suppressed the patri-

patriarchate in the year 1721. But being too wise a politician to declare himself the head of the church, he committed the principal direction of ecclesiastic affairs in spiritual matters to commissioners, under the name of the *Holy-Synod*, of his own appointment, and bound to him by an oath, that they would acknowledge him as their supreme judge. Of this synod the Emperor or Empress of Russia is president. The other members are, a vice-president, who is commonly the metropolitan archbishop, and five counsellors, who are the first prelates of the empire.

The Russian clergy are composed of regulars and seculars: the first, monks; the second, *pappas* or *popes*: i. e. *fathers*.—The monks, like other feudal chiefs, exercised absolute power over their peasants. But Catharine II. granted freedom to the peasants dependent on monasteries, and, while she annexed the estates of the clergy to the crown, paid pensions to the monks and prelates. At the same time, several monasteries were suppressed, and a considerable reduction made
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in the number of monks. Monks, in Russia, are not allowed to marry: but, on the contrary, the marriage of parochial priests is a necessary preliminary to their ordination; but they must not marry any other than young women, being virgins. If their wives die, they may enter into a monastery, and afterwards rise to the highest dignities of the church, which are granted to monks alone. They cannot marry a second time, unless they become laymen; nor, as widowers, remain in the character of curates or priests, without the special licence of the Bishops.

The third order of the state is composed of freemen, who hold a middle place between the nobles and the peasants; who are engaged in the arts, sciences, navigation and commerce, or follow mechanical professions; as also such of the children of commoners as shall be brought out of schools and religious houses of education established by the sovereigns of Russia, and the children too of officers and clerks of chancery. The fourth order consists of the peasants; who,
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as already observed, are in every sense, and to the full extent of the term, bond-men, or slaves. The peasants, however, of Finland, Carelia, and the Ukraine must be excepted; and those also called *Odnodwortzi*, who have no property but a single house. These peasants are independent of the nobility. They are themselves the proprietors, and at the same time the actual cultivators of the soil, having no slaves under them. But many of them, by borrowing the name of some one of the nobility, have by degrees purchased peasants, over whom, it is said, as might be expected, they exercise the severest tyranny. The other peasants may be divided into peasants belonging to the crown, and those belonging to individuals. The former, dwelling on the royal domains, form about a sixth part of the Russian peasants, inclusive of those on the church lands, who did not obtain their freedom when these lands were transferred to the crown. They are under the direction of the imperial officers or bailiffs: under whom they no doubt suffer many hardships; but
against

against whose abuse of power they have some remedy, or hope of remedy, in the protection of the Empress. The most wretched of the poor peasants are those who, like sheep or cattle, are the property of individuals.

From the new and extraordinary privileges bestowed on the nobles, one might be apt to imagine, that this order was the principal, and almost the exclusive object of her care and attention. But this would be a very unwarrantable conclusion. Whatever political reasons this great princess may have, and that she has we may easily imagine, for attaching the nobility to her government, the first object in her mind, in times of peace, and next perhaps after that of foreign conquest, is the diffusion of liberty and equality among the subjects of her vast empire. By the laws and customs of the empire, a peasant may obtain his liberty. 1. By the freedom frequently granted at the death of a master, to those who have been his first servants. 2. By purchasing liberty. 3. By serving in the army or navy.

navy. The present Empress embraces every occasion of opening a way for this numerous and precious part of mankind, to the enjoyment of liberty, by ceding in their favour many rights of the crown which might, in some respects, render that acquisition difficult. Although the Czarina cannot confer on those poor people any privileges of importance that might interfere with those of their masters, she lightens their burthen, and animates their industry, by the hope of liberty.

The Empress, for the excitement of general enterprise, has allowed every freeman to enroll himself, on certain conditions, in the class of merchants and burghesses: who are divided into three classes; the first comprehending those who have a capital of about two thousand five hundred pounds sterling; the second, those who have about two thousand; and the third, those who have the smallest capitals. She has also permitted many peasants on crown lands, to enroll themselves among the burghesses and merchants, and to settle in any

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part of her estates they may choofe. And, in certain diftricts, in her own domains, ſhe has aboliſhed the inhuman laws prohibiting peaſants to marry without the conſent of the governor of the province, or magiſtrate of the city, whoſe favour the huſbands were obliged to conciliate by ſuch preſents as their hard earnings enabled them to make. The abrogation of thoſe oppreſſive laws was equally humane and wiſe: as it not only contributed to the comfort and conſolation of individuals, but alſo to the good of the ſtate, by promoting a numerous population.

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LETTER XXVIII.

*Government of Russia Civil and Political.—
Revenues.*

St. Petersburg, March 1791.

THE Russian Empire, which was at first divided by Peter the Great into nine extensive governments, was subdivided, first into thirty-two, and afterwards, on account of the new provinces added to the empire, into forty-four; containing each, from three to four thousand souls. A governor, called Namestnik, is appointed to the administration of one, and sometimes several governments, and has under him a vice-governor, a council and court of justice, both civil and criminal, some members of which are named by the court, and the rest elected by the nobility. Thus, by this institution, Catharine II. has circumscribed, in no inconsiderable degree, her

her own absolute authority. But, while she has limited the despotism, she has in proportion consulted the stability and duration of the Russian throne. For, political constitutions are precarious or stable as they consist of one or more springs of action. Rights and privileges and powers, in the hands of different orders of men, are a check on that suddenness of revolution which is incident to arbitrary governments. And hence it would seem to follow, as a natural inference, that the surest basis of government is justice; justice, which uniformly grants to every man and class of men, their own. The more constitutions are assimilated to models of perfect justice to every individual, and of as much liberty and interest in the common property of the state as is consistent with the preservation and the tranquillity of the political union, the better: but all innovations, or assimilations to such abstracted models, should be leisurely and circumspect. Due regard must be paid to existing orders and privileges, which form the cement of the existing constitution. If, as a preliminary

to reformation, you loosen the cement, and let the materials that compose the fabric fall to the ground, the edifice that is to rise in its stead, depends not so much on human powers, as on an infinite variety of unforeseen accidents. Metaphysical reforms take up man merely as a reasonable being; whereas he is a being under the influence of various prejudices, appetites, and desires: neither reason nor interest affords any security against the irresistible operation of whim, folly, and passion. The present Empress of Russia has uniformly persevered in her humane and noble plans, from the moment of her ascension to the throne of the Czars: but in proportion as she has advanced in this career of glory, the more she has found the necessity of yielding, in some measure, to present circumstances and situations. The administration of the whole empire is committed to the *directing senate*, and to the principal departments distinguished by the name of *colleges*. The senate, which is a new institution, has succeeded in the room of the courts of chancery established by Peter I.

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This, which is the supreme tribunal, takes cognizance of all the rest. It is divided into fix departments, composed each of one or more senators, who preside each in their turn; of four privy counsellors, and a principal attorney. Under each of these departments is placed, for the execution of the laws, one of the colleges just mentioned, under the denominations of, the college of war, the college for foreign affairs, the college of the admiralty, the college of justice, and the college of commerce. There is also a college of medicine, charged with furnishing the imperial laboratories, which again furnish the private laboratories, which are the only shops of the kind in most of the towns of second rank. The college of justice is divided into several chambers for the trial of criminal and civil cases. The first of these sits at St. Petersburg, and the second at Rostroma. There is one for criminal trials at Catherinoflaw, another at Riga, a third at Kiow, and a fourth at Tobolski. There is not a country in Europe, in which justice is lengthened and tortured

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into

into a lucrative trade, more than in Russia. The *dikafteres*, or courts of justice, are full of attornies, the most insolent and unmannerly crew in all Petersburg, who, in spite of their great numbers, find all of them ways and means to live. And, to augment the vexation as well as the expence of the law, the most trifling deed is drawn out on stamped paper. But before the time of the present Empress the natural disposition of the Russians to litigation was encouraged by an extreme confusion and inconsistency in the laws. Several emperors, and particularly Peter I. and the Empress Elizabeth, had formed the design of reforming the laws: but this was never carried into execution, until Catharine II. in 1767, called the Moscow deputies from all parts of the empire, appointed commissioners to frame new regulations, and delivered to them instructions which she herself had drawn up: in conformity with those instructions, the first part of the new code, distinguished by clemency and political wisdom, appeared in 1775, and the second in 1780.

The REVENUES of Russia arise from the taxes paid by the countries conquered from Sweden, and taken from Poland; a capitation tax laid on all males in the classes of burgesſes and peaſants, from their birth to their death; the cuſtom-houſe duties, which are very heavy; gabelles, or the ſelling of ſalt, a monopoly in the hands of government; the revenues of royal domains enlarged by the annexation of the churchlands, the licences for inns, the produce of the mines and the coinage of money, the emission of bank-bills, and duties on timber: the ſums drawn from all theſe different ſources do not amount to fix millions ſterling. It is not eaſy to conceive how, with a ſum ſo moderate, the Empreſs can ſupport the magnificence of her court, the various eſtabliſhments ſhe has formed, the buildings erected and maintained at her expence, her acts of generoſity, her munificence to the arts and ſciences, the purchaſes ſhe is conſtantly making in different parts of Europe, and the preſents with which ſhe rewards all kinds of extraordinary merit.

LETTER XXIX.

Anecdotes of foreign Officers in the Russian Service—of Count —, a French Officer killed at the Siege of Ismael—of Prince Potemkin, a Polander—of General Gordon—of Count Romanzow—of Marshal Keith.—Of the Progress of Civilization in different Countries.

St. Petersburg, April 1791.

THIS new country, emerged not many years since from the deserts of Tartary, presents a new theatre for all sorts of adventurers. Peace invites the sober and industrious to profit by the commerce which it has lately commenced with the world; and war, the more gallant disposition of youthful chevaliers.

The English are chiefly employed in the fleet. The Germans are the most numerous

rous foreign officers in their armies. The present situation of France has brought hither several naval and military heroes from that nation.

While I stood one evening in the bar of the English tavern, conversing with some officers of my acquaintance, the Count — arrived from France. He spoke English, and joined with us in discourse. It related to the naval engagements last war in the West Indies, and particularly to the glorious 12th of April. The Count had fought against us in the American army. He wore the orders of St. Lewis and Cincinnatus.

An English tar recorded, with rather too much animation, the defeat of the French navy. The Count smiled, and left us. In a few days, he procured a commission in the Russian army; and, having exchanged the white for the green uniform, he drove off to join the army under the command of General Suwarrow. This French nobleman, with all the politeness which distinguishes his nation, possessed an open and frank manner of address; and I do assure you, that

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*an American
order of knighthood*

the intelligence of his fall in the dreadful carnage at the attack of Ismael, drew tears from the same rough British tar, who had so loudly boasted in the presence of the Count of the defeat of his country.

Prince Potemkin, prime minister of Russia, and commander in chief of the army, is by birth a Pole, and at the commencement of his fortunes an adventurer, and holding an inferior rank in one of the regiments of guards, of which he is now lieutenant colonel. Her Imperial Majesty is herself colonel of all her regiments of guards, and on particular days appears in the uniform of those regiments.

The Prince Potemkin, I think, made his first essay as a sergeant. With respect to his abilities, they are naturally great, but uncultivated. Arbitrary governments are certainly the best ground for enterprising genius : distinguished merit and attachment to the sovereign will never fail to overpower those who have only interest.

Prince Potemkin has, however, in Russia, few friends but his august sovereign. Let
merit

merit be ever so distinguished, the antient nobility of a kingdom cannot patiently view what they deem upstarts passing them; and the Prince's behaviour being rude to an extreme does not at all conciliate. The celebrated General Romanzow cannot bear the idea of Potemkin's superiority of command, and has retired from the service. Potemkin is a very fortunate general; and though he should want all other requisites, this single one has and will still bear him on triumphant. This *ci-devant* sergent has as many palaces in the metropolis as the Empress. One of them, constructed of timber, was in flames at the moment of his arrival from the conquest of Oczakow, in February 1789, as if to illuminate his entry. I shall in another place give you a detail of the life of this extraordinary man.

Admiral Greig, long at the head of the Russian navy, was another fortunate adventurer, but of a different character from Prince Potemkin; yet the meekest and most unassuming deportment could not obtain him the entire good will of the Russians.

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Alexis Michaelowitch, father of Peter the Great, was the first to encourage trading foreigners. Peter, of another complexion and turn, encouraged most those who could assist him in building a navy and disciplining an army. The Scotch emigrants arrived at Moscow at a fortunate period. Peter had in them a nursery for raising officers; and we find a General Gordon his principal favourite, insomuch, that when Peter travelled to Holland and England, he left this officer in the chief command. A rebellion broke out in the Emperor's absence; General Gordon had an opportunity of proving his courage and fidelity in quelling it, and at a time when there were several candidates for the throne. These early services of Britons established their reputation with the sovereigns of Russia; and hence the encouragement given them by all succeeding monarchs.

The ocean is the native element of Britons: the military lists of Russia present few commanders in chief from our island unless Marshal Keith, the illustrious preceptor and general

general of the no less illustrious Romanzow, who served as a common foldier in the ranks of General Keith's regiment, for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge of the duty of a foldier in every station.

Peter himself gloried in having risen, in his own fleets and armies, from the rank of a common seaman in the one, and of a common foldier in the other, to the chief command, without permitting the smallest interest to be exerted in his favour.

If the minister of war, or of the naval department, shewed any inclination to give the Emperor a preference, upon his examination with other officers, or upon account of any action performed, he deemed it insulting him; having a noble pride in supposing himself qualified to arrive at the most eminent stations without the prior advantage of being an emperor.

That foreign officers were and still are needed to assist the native officers of Russia in the army and navy, bears no reflection upon the native officers. Every nation in
its

its turn has had the assistance of foreigners. I cannot indeed name the Venetian officers who formerly served in, and commanded the British fleets, but we certainly had some from that earlier maritime power. It is better known that the Roman officers disciplined our army. Nor is it any censure upon the industry or ingenuity of the Russians, that foreigners teach them the arts. England, the nation most famous for manufactures, was instructed by the Flemings to work their staple commodity, wool; and I think one of our Edwards, in a proclamation to his people, gave them notice of the arrival of three or four weavers from Flanders, which, said the monarch, "*may prove of great benefit to us and our subjects.*"

The comparative state of architecture in Russia and other countries, should not hurt their pride, or make them so jealous of our magnificent fabrics. Two hundred and fifty years ago, our dwellings were more humble than the modern Russian cottage, constructed

constructed of fods of earth and thatched with straw, and our beds of the same oecconomical commodity.

It is not amiss to notice memorandums of old days, to qualify the pride arising from excellencies, of which time has all the merit; and to encourage infant nations, and to prevent them from desponding, from the idea of others possessing more wisdom or abilities than themselves.

The Russians cannot however be much condemned for a jealousy so natural to our bosoms, and particularly as they are among the last in appearing upon the theatre of civilization. I do not mean that they are among the last at this period uncivilized. Many nations are far behind the Russians in arts of civilization; but these were once distinguished by arts and sciences. The Russians are among the last of those nations upon the theatre of civilization who were never civilized before; and, allow that they are slower in proportion; (which is not however the case), such an immense body, covering the widest regions, should not be expected

pected to move with the same rapidity as a small body.

The civilization of Russia raises, as it were, from the dead the whole northern nations. Their light of civilization does not rise with the quickness of a meteor; but with the more steady splendour of the sun.

LETTER XXX.

Distinguishing Characteristics of the Northern Nations—of the British Constitution—of Commerce and Agriculture in Britain.—The British and Russian Peasant, their Situation compared:—the Wretchedness of the first, the Happiness of the last.—Of the fatal Effects of overgrown Commerce.

Ingria, July 1791.

THE northern nations inhabiting the same countries, and living under the same skies, are yet very different in national character. The Dane, the former lord of Scandinavia, is sullen, from reflection of his former power. The Swede, proud of having shaken off the Danish yoke, is proud too of the chains of his native sovereigns. The Finlander never had a native sovereign: he

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can shew no register of war and murder ; no list of heroic plunderers ; no standards taken from the enemy in battle : he contents himself with wearing at second hand the shackles which surrounding nations have manufactured for themselves under the direction of their princes.

The Russians, emerging from the region of slavery, *Sclavonia*, are daily advancing in the arts of peace, which lead to freedom. Happy for them that they have before them, as upon a map, the example of other kingdoms, and that from this example they may be taught to escape, and to beware of the deluge of blood, the anarchy and ruin attending hasty struggles to obtain freedom !

In great commercial countries, the appearance of liberty is better preserved without the real enjoyment of it, than in other nations. In the first, a great proportion of the people are rendered wealthy by trade, foreign and domestic. As these, together with the wealthy landed proprietors and others, employ a vast number of manufacturers, shop-

shopkeepers, artists, servants, and the lower order of traders of all descriptions, it follows, that so immense a body mutually supporting each other, the less rich and inferior orders among them will not complain much, while they can collect in various ways a share of their wealth, in whatever way that wealth be attained; whether by oppressing the lowest order, by trade, or by places and pensions.

But allowing this immense body to be contented so far, yet while another considerable part of the community are starving, their contentment is no proof of the freedom of a nation, or of the justice of the laws, which permit the most industrious and useful and virtuous part of the community to drag out a painful existence. I allude to the day-labourer employed in agriculture: and strange as it may seem, the day-labourer in Britain in no shape lives so comfortably and happy as the Russian slave. It is hard that commerce should occasion, as it actually does, the ruin of the peasantry.

In old times the landholder lived in a
Vol. I. A a more

more distinguished manner than he does now : the small farmers and cottagers upon his estate lived happy : there were no day-labourers ; the sons and daughters, the servants, *who lived in the house with the family*, did every work. The number of hands employed upon the estates were double and triple to what they are at present, if we take into the account the different states of agriculture at that period and at the present.

Commerce and luxury have occasioned the present melancholy alteration. The merchant emulates the landholder, and surpasses him in wealth and manner of living. The landholder, despising trade, has recourse to new methods less honourable, to keep pace in magnificence with the upstart warehouseman. He turns away all his cottagers. He lets out his estate in large farms to a few tenants at short leases, and at the highest rents. The leases expired, he again racks the rent to support an increase of extravagance. The fields which supported many a happy family, are laid out in grass to fatten various brute animals for the markets

in trading towns, and to supply a more luxurious food for persons engaged in trade.

Many of the cottagers become, of consequence, traders and manufacturers, porters, chairmen, &c. The city is reared and filled, every dirty lane is crowded. The cottage is in ruins and deserted. The farmer, racked to the utmost, upon the other hand, employs as few labourers as possible, and in the most economical manner. Instruments are invented to effect laborious purposes without the aid of men. The extension of trade still fails to employ every body, and a considerable number remain to starve upon the scanty pittance of the farmer, who gives money instead of maintenance that he may with the more certainty know his expenditure. He keeps all the lands in his own hands. The labourers and cottagers had formerly a house, a small portion of land, upon which they raised some corn, and maintained perhaps both a horse and cow, besides what they could otherways earn from the head master.

Allowing the day-labourer to have one shilling to eighteen pence a day, and this

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upon an average, is the full sum he has over all Britain; allow his family to consist of a wife and three children, how is it possible they can live, having every thing to purchase, and nearly at 30 per cent. higher than the ordinary rate of the market, owing to the very small quantities they are able to purchase at a time? But when a day-labourer's family consists of nine or ten children, and his earning only one shilling a day, which is frequently the case, what then must be his miseries!

Thus, men employed in the most rational and innocent business of life are made wretched by commerce, while the drunken porter in large cities can with less, or with equal exertion, make five, to eight and ten shillings per day.

These are the blessings of commerce and luxury. The day-labourer is out of our sight: we see and hear nothing in our cities, but the rattling of splendid equipages, elegant shops and hotels, and all the blaze of luxury and dissipation: the harbours are crowded with shipping, the warehouses with goods,

goods, and our ministers descant upon the prosperous state of the nation.

I think it is Dr. Goldsmith, who somewhere remarks, that a nation, like a bit of paper on fire, may make a fine show while it is hastening to decay.

To descant upon prosperity, while it carries with it a flame that must consume it, is as ridiculous as to pourtray a disease without pointing out a cure. The cure is simple. Every landholder should be obliged to furnish a small house for every labourer employed by the farmers upon his estate. Half of the present wages to be paid them in money; and in consideration of the other half, the labourer shall have besides a free house, a small garden, and permission to graze one cow in the farmer's pastures. Unmarried as well as married labourers should be hired upon the same terms for the encouragement of matrimony, as well as to prevent, as is now the case, a preference being given to unmarried men.

The Russian peasants are all of them cottagers; and although they pay an arbitrary

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rent to their lords, I have not yet found any instance, where the peasant could not with common industry pay his rent, do all his services, and live comfortably. The only improvement to better their situation is for the lord to take a rent without personal service; as this sometimes proves fatal to the cottager's own crop. The landholder may keep as many of his slaves as are necessary in his immediate employment upon his own farms. Even when the Russian cottager fails in paying his rent, and is ruined, by whatever cause, the landholder must maintain him and his family; so that a sufficient check is established upon the proprietor not to use his peasants harshly. A Russian peasant drinks to the amount of half the wages of the British day-labourer yearly in brandy: his family and himself are, notwithstanding of this, never in want of victuals. If a joyful heart and a sufficient subsistence are marks of happiness, the Russian boor is happy: if the want of these be a mark of misery, the British peasant is wretched. The Russian peasant is liable to receive

receive a severe beating from his overseer when he deserves it: the British peasant cannot be struck, but he is liable to starve.

If the Russian peasantry, forming the mass of this nation, are so well provided for: if the remainder of the people are still wealthier and happier, who are engaged in trade and manufactures, what are the superior advantages derived from overgrown commerce and wealth? what advantage from a free constitution, when the situation of the mass of a nation we call slaves, is proved to be more agreeable and happy than our own?

It is true our constitution possesses more than any other the power of rectifying itself; but if this power is not drawn forth, what avails it? It is a mockery of the people for men in power to say, "We can make you happy if we choose." They may at last provoke the people to reply, "You shall make us happy instantly, or we will make you miserable."

In no country upon earth is public and private charity so distinguishable as in Bri-

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tain: but it provides only for invalids: the day-labourer is equally an object of charity, until the laws provide better for him, and prevent the effects of overgrown commerce and luxury from ruining the most useful part of the community. It is not merely in this most useful art of peace, agriculture, that the peasant is serviceable: he makes the best soldier when his country requires defence, accustomed to hard labour and living, and exposed at all times to the weather. This very art of peace fits him for the art of war: the woodman with his axe is a native pioneer: the hedger and ditcher will with little instruction construct entrenchments and batteries: he who forms the public roads will construct one through a difficult pass for an army: they can subsist upon the coarsest fare, and undergo every fatigue. Is it this class of men whom Britain permits to starve?

Commerce encourages no active employments, unless seamen, nor promotes hardi-
ness and health. The bulk of our manu-
facturers live too well to be fit for any
active

active scene, unless in riots in their neighbourhoods; and the generality of traders are abler to pay others for defending them, than to defend themselves. Whenever wealth is procured, all activity ceases, unless to accumulate, and to obtain additional gratifications of sense.

The celebrated Dr. Adam Smith has certainly pointed out the best methods for nations to acquire wealth. If he had taught how to procure happiness with it, to the whole body of the people, his work might have been more celebrated. The wealth of nations is incompatible with happiness. No nation will ever be happy who increases trade rather than agriculture; and by agriculture I mean rearing crops of corn, not of grass. Pasturage and the other crops for the brute creation, banish men from their native homes, and collect them together in luxurious, vicious bodies to feed upon animal food: or, if the country has no trade, pasturage annihilates the human race: the natives are vagrant wanderers and robbers, plundering and murdering each other.

Suppose

Suppose every estate in England was let, by four or five acres to one family, and two thirds of this farm producing corn. Would not the estates be inhabited by ten times the number of its present inhabitants? Trade and agriculture would then employ every person, and maintain them. Trade would only draw off from the more human and rational profession of agriculture the enterprising spirits. Great cities would be inhabited by choice, not from necessity to procure a livelihood, by administering to the vices and follies of the wealthy and exalted ranks: and when the period arrives that cities are inhabited by choice, they will be less distinguished by vice and folly. Men are not vicious and foolish by choice: and a few wealthy and vicious individuals will not corrupt the bulk of the people, did not they depend so much upon the wealthy, and were they not thus drawn in to follow their example, as a servant the wicked courses of his master.

Monopolies are scouted in trade; why
not

not too in agriculture? Large farms are monopolies, and are more distressing to society than monopolies in commerce. To regulate by law the properties of individuals for the good of the public, is not to rob individuals: nay, it would in reality increase their incomes: and the view of thousands of smiling villagers might afford as much pleasure as the lowing of herds, and the bleating of flocks.

It is a datum long since granted in agriculture, that the greater quantity of produce is consumed upon estates, they will be so much the more fertile. The modern farmer is put to vast expence in bringing manure from a distance of several miles, which increases in proportion the prices of the produce. The advocate of commerce will start this objection, that produce consumed at home will employ less shipping in exporting to foreign countries and coastways, and that the nursery of seamen for our fleet will be hurt. I answer, that where capital, industry, and commercial habits and enterprize prevail, subjects and channels

Ja Pitt
channels of commerce will never be wanting: and, at any rate, a sufficient number of seamen for the defence of the nation, though not, perhaps, for the wars of the minister, might still be had. This number will consist of the enterprising and turbulent, the best adapted for war; and not, as upon the present system, of Britons dragged from their families and friends.

LETTER XXXI.

Norway—and Lapland.

St. Petersburg, August 1791.

YOU desired me to give you my observations on the kingdom of Norway and the Norwegians, from whom so great a part of Britain is peopled.

The Norwegian women are celebrated for their fecundity; and every inhabitable part of Norway swarms with people: vast regions are covered with woods, we need not say with rocks, because the very rocks are covered with pine-trees: it is common to see trees growing, and twisting their roots for their support and nourishment around, and into every crevice of the stone, where there is no soil visible. Every precipice in
Norway

Norway is overhung with these nodding plumes.

Norway, or Norway, has its name from its situation, *i. e.* the northern way; the way to the north. It is divided into five provinces: first, Wardhus, or Norwegian Lapland. Of this province it is sufficient to observe, that it lies within the arctic circle. The natives are a distinct race from the inhabitants of the other provinces: they are ignorant, but a harmless people.

They were probably the first inhabitants of Sweden and Norway; the first adventurers from Scythia, and driven from the southern parts into those dreary deserts, by new invaders, long before their irruptions into Britain. Historians agree that those swarms choked up every corner of the north, and that it was in search of more room, and of bread, rather than of fame and conquest, that they marched to the south.

The poor Laplanders, then dwelling in Sweden and Norway, were no doubt first disinherited: they have still traditions among them, of battles with those invaders; and
from

from their manners and customs at this day, we can trace their Scythian origin. The Goths, I shall suppose, did not make choice of the northern mountains for a dwelling-place, until they had attempted the richer soil and finer climate of France and Italy. They were driven back by Marius into Germany; from whence, as it was unable to support increasing swarms of yearly emigrants, they would be obliged to pass over into Scandinavia.

How the Laplanders came into Sweden, and at what period, bids defiance almost even to conjecture. I cannot think they entered Sweden and Norway by the way of Germany. This fine country would have detained them. It is more probable that their unlucky stars led them by the head of the Bothnian Gulph. Those dismal regions upon the Frozen Ocean, from Wardhus to the northern cape of Kamtschatka, are still inhabited by a race of men similar to the Laplanders, and who, no doubt, had taken the same ill-fated journey from Tartary.

The natives of Wardhus maintain themselves

selves chiefly by fishing in summer; and they lay up a stock of fish, too, for the long winter. They have, besides, great herds of rein-deer, which are to them instead of horses and cows: they live upon their milk; seldom kill them; and when they have flesh meat, it is of the bear and other animals, which they procure by hunting. Their habitations are tents in summer, erected near the most favourable spots for hunting, fishing, and grazing.

In winter they bury themselves in conical huts, covered with earth, to keep out the severe cold. The furs of the bear and wolf furnish them with clothing. Unacquainted with luxury, and accustomed to hardships, they have few wants.

The Norwegians and Danes have at last prevailed upon them to believe that they are in want of some things, and they exchange their furs for brandy, meal, and other articles. As their country produces so few commodities for trade, they ingeniously contrived some others. They were formerly famous for dealing in winds, thunder, and

and lightning, wholesale and retail; and *still*, now and then, pick up a foolish mariner to purchase a talisman and magical notes.

The crown of Denmark receives little benefit from this class of its subjects: a few skins and fish is all they have to spare. The Danish government, nevertheless, takes some pains in civilizing the Laplanders; and the missionaries have converted many of them to christianity.—Driven, at an early period, from the southern provinces of Sweden and Norway, they were not instructed in the doctrines of christianity on their introduction into these kingdoms: but they escaped the deluge of blood with which christians afterwards covered one another for ages.—Drontheim is the next province to Wardhus; and here begins what is commonly called Norway, as distinguished from Norwegian Lapland. The next is Bergen; and the other two, bordering upon the arm of the sea leading to the Categate, are Agerhus and Bahus.

Norway has two summers and two win-

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ters. Towards the sea coasts, and especially in the southern parts, the climate is mild; neither too hot in summer, nor too cold in winter. The neighbourhood of the ocean easily accounts for this happy temperature. Inland, the summer is as hot as the winter is cold. The high mountains obstruct the oblique rays of the winter's sun from warming the deep vallies between them, and retain long, upon their tops, ice and snow.

As the mountains occasion an increase of cold in winter, so they are the cause of increased heat in summer. The sun, more vertical, darts his rays into the vallies, and upon the mountains' sides, which, closely surrounding the vallies, collect those rays as in a focus. The farther to the north, the effect is the stronger, as the cause is increased by the greater altitude of the sun, and his longer continuance above the horizon. In Lapland, the sun for some time in summer is seen revolving round the earth, without setting; and when he sets, it is for so short a space, that the vallies have not
had

had time to cool, when his fierce rays again heat them.

But this orb, as if it had exhausted its strength and heat, never rises to enlighten these dreary lands in winter. A feeble twilight, a darkness visible, accompanies his approach to the horizon: but his glowing edge is never seen, nor is there a cloud gilded with his beams.

Lapland has only one day, and one night, in the year: her day, of two months' continuance; her gloomy night, of ten.

The moon however cheers the Laplander, and the reflection of her rays upon the snow and ice, which spreads every where, gives sufficient light for their winter's work and travelling.

Indeed they could not travel at any other season. The snow smooths the rugged way, and enables the rein-deer to draw the sledges with amazing rapidity. How admirable is the providence of nature! Were the sun to shine upon Lapland during winter, and at the same time should the snow continue upon the ground, it would deprive

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the inhabitants of sight.—Even the reflection of the moon's rays from the snow occasions blindness in many of the natives. The laws of nature have rendered the continuance of the sun and of snow, for any length of time, above the horizon, incompatible.

The Norwegians are a fine race of men, of a free and generous spirit, and watch over their liberties with unremitted vigilance. Many ages have elapsed since they have settled quietly at home, and ceased to disturb the liberties of others. The Norwegians are all husbandmen, fishermen, or mariners. There are few other distinct professions among them: every one, as is commonly the case in northern countries in general, is his own taylor, carpenter, shoemaker, smith, &c. They shew much ingenuity in every thing they undertake; and some of the greatest curiosities in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen are the handiworks of Norwegian peasants. The fisheries upon the coasts of Norway, and merchant ships, employ one half of the inhabitants;

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the other half are employed in agriculture, the iron and copper mines, cutting, transporting, and sawing of timber, and ship-building. The sea coasts are so formed, as to save trouble and expence of many nets in their fisheries: the whole is a kind of network of rocks, and thousands of small inlets of the sea, always filled in the season with shoals of fish. The Norwegians have only to cast a net at the entrance of the inlet, in order to prevent the fish from going away, and another to drag them to the shore. Several kinds are salted; others are cured by the simple process of spreading them upon the rocks.

After laying in their yearly quantity for home consumption, and for the merchant vessels, the Norwegians export vast quantities to every corner of Europe. There are numbers of rivers in Norway; but an inconveniency occurs, naturally to be expected in such a mountainous country: their navigation, even for small boats, is interrupted by water-falls. The timber cut in the inland forests is sadly broken before

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it arrives at the sea-ports, being hurled down every cataract in its way, and with such force as to be dashed against the rocky bottom of the river beneath. For this there is no remedy, as the carriage by land would be impracticable, and, at any rate, attended with an expence double the value of the balks. The property of many different merchants is floated down at the same time; and each is enabled to know his own at its arrival, by his distinguishing mark, put upon the trees, at the time of their being cut down in the woods.

Great Britain is the principal market for their timber. The vast quantity exported, and the difficulty of bringing the balks from the new forests at great distances, which must be resorted to when those nearer are thinned or cut down, has raised the prices considerably within these few years; and the practice of cutting the young trees for foreign markets will add to the scarcity and price. The Danish government ought to make a serious enquiry into these matters: for, if the price increases in proportion to
what

what it has done of late, the British importer will find out other markets where to supply himself at cheaper rates.

The Norwegians begin to copy the English in the modelling of their ships, and build very fine ones for sale, as well as for their own use. The clumsy galleys of the Hans-towns, the first European commercial states, are no longer the models for the ships of other nations; though several of the cities which were in this famous compact, still persist in the old fashion of their aiks, which first floated upon our seas, in order to preserve, no doubt, some remembrance of their former splendour.

The Norwegians are active and honourable in their dealings, and exceedingly keen in prosecuting schemes of trade. They are celebrated for their longevity, and of a hardy strong constitution both of body and mind. They do not bury themselves in furs, as most of the northern people do; they pique themselves on keeping cold at defiance, and, to shew their hardiness, will even put snow into their bosoms. A warm

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dress

dress is considered as effeminate: and this idea seems to be received too amongst Britons. At this day, there are greater numbers that die in Britain of cold, than of all other diseases not originating in colds, put together: and this evil entirely arises from a foolish pride of strutting about in those thin slices of modern manufacture. The golden fleeces of our sheep, given us by kind nature to guard us against the peculiar inconstancy of our climate, are frittered away into spiders webs. For my part, I am at no loss to decide which appears most effeminate, to wear a comfortable great-coat, or to shiver to death under a gauze tippet. The Norwegians do not carry the jest so far; it is only with their bosoms they use freedom, in the pride of their heart. They wear clothes of coarse warm stuffs.

The Norwegians are exceedingly fond of dancing: they are continually trotting to the sound of the violin. In winter, there is a ball in every third house, in every town in Norway, each evening: and even in summer, when their daily labours are
over,

over, they assemble in parties to dance and drink.

I have seen the Norwegian sailors dancing upon their ship's deck at sea, in calm weather; and one never meets with their vessels at sea without hearing a concert, if the weather is moderate. Their music is without melody, and their playing without art; but they are determined to be pleased.

Of a lively disposition, they are quick and violent in their passions, especially when intoxicated. In former times, it was common for the guests at an entertainment to have knives in their belts, ready to determine upon the spot any quarrel that might arise in the course of the feast. The laws have now curbed this custom of monarchs; and the Norwegian sells his knife, and all his moveables and immoveables, to enable him to ruin himself by law-suits with every person who vexes him. Nay, when he is ruined, he is certain of a subscription from his neighbours, to help him to renew his attacks.

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LETTER XXXII.

Russian Climate.—Contrast of Russian and English Customs.—Winter Assemblies.—Russians and French nearly resemble each other in Character, Manners, and Customs.

St. Petersburg, April 1791.

DEAR SIR,

THIS winter is not so agreeable as the last. The weather is variable. We have one week of severe frost; and another succeeds of thaw and fleet. Such a winter is not only dangerous to the constitution, but is attended with fatal consequences in regard to the provision of the natives. The frozen beef, fowl and fish become clammy and putrid; and notwithstanding the care of the police to have such provision destroyed, the poor will purchase it; or, if a frost again succeeds, the putrid provision, a second

time frozen, is sold in the market, and disease and death retailed out to the inhabitants.

The idea of a Scythian winter makes the people of more southern regions tremble—eternal ice and snow! A Russian considers it as the greatest misfortune if ice and snow do not remain for six months of the year; and the more severe the frost, the finer the winter is esteemed. He has laid in provision for this length of time for himself, his family, and cattle, and a sufficient quantity of wood for his stoves: nothing can interrupt this happy situation but a thaw to spoil his provisions. A Russian looks up to the frowning face of heaven in winter with a smile: he trembles when the sun makes his way through the clouds. A mild winter in Russia overturns not only the æconomy, but the amusements and exercises of the natives. They look forward to the cold season as a season of rest and mirth: covered with furs, and seated in his sledge, none is so happy as a Russian; his horses fly with him over the ice and snow; he sings and
drinks

drinks without ceasing from October to May. Nor is the approach of winter less delightful to the higher ranks. This is the season of every thing elegant in dress and manners. The summer is spent in collecting their rents, the winter in spending them. Their ancient dress and hospitality are to be seen in winter only in the great cities. The antiquated castle is deserted; the wild winds whistle through the halls: but here wealth and joy are masters of the revels.

The Russians are very happy in winter, and they wish every person to know and to witness their happiness. The Briton, when he resolves to be merry with his friends, makes fast his window shutters, secures every hole through which curiosity might be tempted to peep at him and them, and is not at his ease if any person comes uninvited. A Russian, whether of the higher or lower class, seldom knows what is to be the number of his company. His windows have no shutters; or, if they have, they are only shut when the company is gone, as if it were to declare his melancholy. His
candles

candles are all lighted up; the dining or dancing room is one blaze of light, and illuminates the opposite street and houses. The company are distinctly seen by every passenger; but so accustomed are they to these scenes, that they seldom stop to survey them. It is otherwise with a Briton. I took my station near the window of every ball-room which I found out in my evening walks, and I had a better opportunity of viewing the Russian manners without doors than if I had been one of the company.

The winter assemblies, unless those at private houses, indiscriminately admit, and at an easy charge, every person. The public assemblies here are generally masquerades, though the stiff German and Briton have introduced a few select clubs and parties. There are German balls, and English balls; and only a few Germans admitted to the one, and a few English to the other. To the honour of Russia, there is a Russian ball: they mix with foreigners, and delight to do it; and the higher their rank, with the more ease and familiarity. This is, no doubt,

doubt, in part, a newly acquired character in the Russians. The ancient manners of their great families were distinguished by pride and ceremony; yet it does them much honour so quickly to throw them off, and to choose for their pattern the politest nation in the world. The German and Englishman residing here, however, take to themselves the credit of reforming the Russian manners; but I am at a loss to find out in what the Russians have copied after them, unless it be in their manner of war, of commerce and navigation. The Russians and French, after whom the former have copied many polished improvements, seem to have had the same original. I never saw two people so like each other; even under the disguise of the beard and sheep-skin, the similarity of features is striking. The Russian boor has all the vivacity and ease of the French: the sensations of pleasure and pain have, as with them, instantaneous communication with his heart: he has the very shrug of the Frenchman. It does not signify that the Russian is in different situations proud, stiff, appa-

apparently stupid, and unfeeling: this is his assumed or acquired character, as he is in office or a slave: I am speaking of his natural character. The French, polished as they are, have been too suddenly let loose; and this vivacity has betrayed them into shameful barbarities. Were the unpolished Russian loosened at once from his chain, his barbarities would go beyond all bounds. The Russian is however far from having a savage disposition; but his unpolished vivacity requires as yet severe laws, and a longer acquaintance with men and manners, with arts and sciences, to curb it.

In Petersburg I have an opportunity of examining not merely the character of the Russians, but of various nations, as far as these can be drawn from heterogeneous collections. These foreigners are all of them anxious to display the fashions and character of their respective countries, before the Russian; no doubt with the liberal intention of instructing him. They are unfortunately ignorant that the higher classes of the Russians, already polished by travel and the best masters, hold them in contempt. *Gentlemen*

lemen who visit Russia to pick up money by retailing articles of *gallantry*, are not the best masters of politeness; nor are traders of any class the best models for ease and elegance in manners and customs. Notwithstanding, however, that these gentlemen are mistaken in being the leaders of fashion and taste in Russia, they are of infinite benefit to the lower and middling ranks of the people, who begin to copy after them in many things, and especially in vying with them in arts and in commerce.

The English and Germans, like the Tartars, by these national assemblies, wish, no doubt, to preserve their own society and manners pure and unadulterated from the Russian and all other. I am far from meaning to ridicule a society so natural as clubs of countrymen in foreign nations, when it is for the purpose of being easier and happier together than they could be at all times in mixed company: but it is truly ridiculous to find, in those chosen parties, more spleen, dispute, and uproar, than in the mixed clubs and assemblies, in which the presence of superior rank and politeness
com-

commands respect and sets an example. A heterogeneous collection of adventurers in commerce, pushing their fortunes from the lowest originals; jealous, and contending with each other in all the little arts and meanneſſes of trade, are not the proper perſons to form ſelect clubs for the purpoſes of being ſocial and happy. They bring the recollection of ſome conteſt upon the Exchange with them to their balls: little minds cannot forget ſuch things, even in the miſt of ſocial moments. Were I to condeſcend to mention their vulgar and riotous behaviour upon various occaſions, it would expoſe them to the contempt of the world. The Germans and Engliſh, and all other trading foreigners here, ought to eſteem it the higheſt honour to be admitted into the ſociety of the Ruſſian nobles, and gentlemen of Ruſſia; who, poſſeſſing as much family pride as the high ranks of other nations, yet knowing it to be the deſire of the ſovereign and government, condeſcend to mix with, and to treat even with reſpect, every foreigner. In return for this condeſcenſion, the gentry of the ware-
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house have supposed, that it is from the benefit the Russian nobility derive from their more civilized deportment at the dancing assemblies, that they are favoured with their company; and that a Russian prince comes to learn the elegant gait and attitude, the graceful step and bow, of a British retailer of hemp.

I would recommend to those foreigners a more modest behaviour. It is a man's greatest excellence to act well in that profession which his fortune, his choice, and his talents have provided for him. Many of the foreign merchants here are men of ability and integrity: they ought to reflect upon the consequence of the conduct I have noticed: it is their business and interest to conciliate the esteem of a nation among whom they are accumulating riches. The Russians are very sensible of the benefit they derive from the commerce which those individuals assist in introducing to the country; and certainly it is for the honour and benefit of the Russians of all classes, to give all countenance, and to shew every regard for such useful members of their state. The Russians of all ranks

ranks are willing to shew this countenance and regard, but are often forced to withhold both, from the petulance and impertinence of those upon whom they bestow such attention. Whatever benefit may be derived from those select societies by men pinned down by profession or connections to one place, at least the vagrant part of mankind, among which number I must reckon myself, can derive small advantage.

I did not come here to inform myself of the character, the customs, or the manners of Britons; their society is therefore of no use to me. I found various nations here, which I had never seen, and with them I associated. Sometimes you would have found me in a Finland hut, conversing by means of an interpreter with the family; sometimes making love to a Finland or a Russian girl, which needed no interpreter. One day I got half seas over with a Russian, the next day with a Cossack: nothing can be done with the Scythians without the help of brandy.

Whenever any traveller arrived at the post-house, I placed myself by his side; and having

an interpreter at hand, I enquired of him whatever related to his journey, or to his country. I did not satisfy myself with this; I took my pencil and delineated his figure, physiognomy and dress. I apologized for my curiosity, by telling them that their nation and character were equally famous in all parts of the world, and that I wished to carry home with me the pictures of men who did honour to their species. At my leisure hours I compared the different conversations with the natives of the same country or province, and found no difficulty in distinguishing by the comparison truth from falsehood.

You would have seen me sometimes sitting by the highway; before me passed a variety of nations: sometimes walking with a band of gypsies; at other times journeying with a Russian boor upon a cart: sometimes examining into the household economy of a Finland matron; or seated with them at a feast upon their saint's day. Not a wedding, nor a christening, nor a burial occurred, that I did not attend as punctually as the clerk of the parish.

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When I keep any society with my countrymen, it is with the naval and military officers, with many of whom I am intimately acquainted: from them I obtain the most interesting information at this period of the war; and when they arrive from the scene of action, they submit to be examined by me as before a court martial.

Several of them have written journals of the campaign for my use, and given me plans of the different engagements. Such society undoubtedly is the most proper for travellers, who have it in view to attempt the description of nations and of things most instructive as well as entertaining to mankind. Such society would be most proper for all men; but all men have not opportunity or inclination. The task to inform them has devolved as by legacy upon the vagrant and unsettled; or, if you please, upon those who are nobly inspired with a thirst of knowledge; who value wisdom more than riches; and, accordingly, are seldom in possession of both.

Besides the masquerades and private dancing assemblies already noticed, both which seem originally Russian amusements (so congenial are they with their dispositions), and are practised even among the lowest orders, there are various clubs which serve at the same time as ordinaries, coffee-houses, and concert-rooms; some common to the public, others to subscribers only. The public ordinaries are of a very different description from those in England; for as on the one hand there are few taverns or hotels in Russia, that will bear any comparison with the houses in that line in Britain; so on the other the highest classes will dine at the ordinaries, where you find at the same time both cheap entertainment and elegant society; and into their public ordinary, as well as into the private club-rooms, the company must all come, if they mean to dine, at the same hour, which in the latitude of Russia and Germany is one o'clock. At this hour too Her Imperial Majesty sits down to dinner. I very seldom observe what we call select companies together: the same table

table serves every person ; and you are entertained with conversation in various languages. The genius of the people delights in such meetings : they have no relish for retiring with a few friends into a private room, though you would imagine that under an arbitrary government this mode might be more agreeable and safe. In England, as if we were afraid of being overheard by some Government spies, we, for the most part, shut ourselves into some snug room when we go to public-houses ; and even when we go to coffee-houses, where our most open meetings are held, the genius of shyness and jealousy still presides, and various partitions and curtains divide us from each other. A foreigner, who does not know our way, is apt to be taken for a pick-pocket by familiarly sitting down by the side of an Englishman in his curtained chamber, and beginning to converse with him. I guess that the coffee-house is not originally English : it is a copy of the foreign ordinary, with additions and improvements suited to the reclusive dispositions of

the natives. In England, the distinctions among men are most observed within doors; in Russia and other countries, without doors. The Russians of all ranks delight to mix together, not only in masquerades, but in other public places. The greatest respect being at all times paid by inferiors to their superiors, the first are at no trouble to assume dignity and consequence; but, on the contrary, they are happy at times to hide their stars and ribbons under a mask. In England, matters are arranged otherwise: the nobility and gentry are particularly attentive into what company they go. The tickets for assemblies, in order to render it difficult for any person of inferior rank to procure one, are sometimes delivered to ladies of the highest quality to distribute. Thus, our higher class endeavour to retaliate upon the lower their want of respect and distinction for them in public.

Her Imperial Majesty gives frequent balls at the palace, and once a year a public masquerade. I can see Catharine at her card parties like her subjects; she never shuts

shuts her windows; and the numerous windows and lustres in a winter's evening have a grand show, and mark the spot as the residence of majesty.

The Neva has twice broken its bounds in the course of this winter. When the racing-ground had been swept, and railed in, the thaw commenced, and the race-ground was dissolved. The whole round of amusements was overturned. The Russians sit very awkwardly in cold seasons in the wheel carriages; and consider it as the greatest calamity to be deprived of their sledges and ice-hills: but for all this they will not part with their sheep-skins and furs. At the beginning of winter the dress is fixed for six months, without respect of thaws, or temperate, mild weather; nay, even in the theatres, which are heated with stoves, and where foreigners feel no cold, the Russians sit in their fur cloaks; and if any accident remove the corners from their shoulders, they are careful to replace them. It would be a new sight to you, to view a powdered beau sitting *tête-à-tête* in a front box with his *chere amie*, his white head alone

alone appearing prominent amidst black bears' skins.

However tenacious the Russians are of their furs, they part with their hats the moment they enter any house: the very gods themselves, in the upper gallery, which is known here by the name of Paradise, are all to *a man* without their bonnets, and as quiet and peaceable as one could wish.—What a contrast between the theatres upon the Continent and an English one! As we surpass them in the excellence of our plays, our actors and scenery, so they excel us in their attention to what is represented, and in civility to each other. The upper gallery in an English theatre is a continued scene of riot; in the first gallery are frequent disputes; and even the pit and boxes are not always the regions of politeness or silence. The fractious and unyielding temper of our countrymen is highly censurable, and throws a veil over those good qualities which they pre-eminently inherit. We never take off our hats in the theatres, unless during the performance of the play. At the end of each act we replace our hats on our heads,
as

as if we felt uneasiness or some inferiority without them ; and this even in the presence of our King, although we certainly owe a particular respect to those whom our ancestors have chosen, and whom we have approved for our chief. I must give you a sketch of John Bull in foreign countries ; I have witnessed his adherence to old manners, and I have witnessed his improvements.

A young Londoner, just arrived here, was detected in the English coffee-house reading the newspapers with his hat on his head. However strange it may appear, his countrymen found fault with it. A placard was stuck up on the walls of the coffee-room, giving notice, " That any English gentleman (none else being admitted), entering this room, was desired to keep his hat off while he remained there." John growled at such an insult : " I never understood," said he, " that such ceremony was requisite in a coffee-house." A gentleman of the commercial house of Baron Sutherland replied, " that it was the custom in Russia for every person to take off his hat, even upon
entering

entering any tradesman's shop." The Englishman declared, he never would comply with those ridiculous fashions, and persisted in keeping his hat in *statu quo*; yet stretching a point in the cause of civility and good manners, he excused himself upon account of a head-ach.

LETTER XXXIII.

Russian Ice Hills.—Winter Diversions.—Travelling Regulations.—Anecdote of a Russian Colonel.—Ceremonies of the Russian Church.—Of the Religion of ancient Scandinavia.

Ingria, April 1791.

WHEN I am tired of Petersburg, I retire into the country; and when tired of the country, without regarding the season of the year, I come into the town. The customs and manners of the people are to be seen at all seasons; and wherever I have the least opportunity to discover something new, there is my residence.

The winter still comes and goes: I take my morning's walk among the Finland villages, when the silver frost has embroidered the ground. The sun rises now at an earlier hour, and promises summer again to the Russians. The Finlanders are diverting themselves upon their ice hills: a sloping
hill

hill saves them the trouble of erecting them as at Petersburg. It is here a very simple entertainment: the lads and lasses, seated upon pieces of boards, descend the hill over the frozen snow, which by this exercise is rendered smooth and hard. At Petersburg the ice hills are a work of labour and art; four strong beams of wood are fixed in the Neva ice, upon their ends, in the form of a square: the top, which is about thirty or forty feet from the river, is planked and railed at the sides: from the top a platform is laid with a sudden descent reaching to the river, and about eight or ten feet in breadth: upon this, square pieces of ice are placed, beginning at the bottom; and water thrown upon the icy pavement, soon cements the whole into one sheet of ice: a ladder enables the Russians to mount this square pillar, and from the summit they precipitate themselves upon skaits, or upon small wooden machines resembling a boat. The girls are generally seated before the men, who guide the vessel down the slippery way, and which indeed requires the nicest pilotage: for, notwithstanding that the platform is
railed

railed at the sides, to strike against this rail, considering the velocity of their course, is equally dangerous as to be tossed over it. This rapid descent gives an equally rapid motion to the vessel after its arrival at the bottom; and impels it along for several minutes upon the frozen bed of the river, which is swept and railed in to mark the course and to keep off the multitude. Opposite to the first ice hill, and where the railed course terminates, another ice hill is erected. Here the Russians again mount, and return to whence they had come: but, to prevent the different parties from meeting in passing and repassing, a rail divides the course, leaving one half for those going, and the other for those returning.

It is admirable to see young boys coming down those slippery precipices upon one skait, with the greatest ease and address: and so familiar are such exercises to all, that even young children of four and five years of age, not yet taught to skait, will nevertheless have their sport; and, throwing themselves upon their breast, hurl their little bodies down the declivity.

I have here received several invitations to partake of those diversions. A young handsome Russian girl, observing that there would be no danger in placing myself beside her, offered to be my guide, and conduct me safe into the valley. I was of another opinion, and that there would be some danger in placing myself beside her: I told her so. She laughed, and repeated that there would be no danger.—I ventured; the girl held me in her arms. We repeated the race—I became fond of the diversion; and the charming girl has promised, but I don't believe her, that I shall run no danger in her arms.

This inconstant winter occasions much inconvenience to travellers: if they begin their journey in sledges upon the snow, in a few days the snow dissolves, and their carriages are useless. They contrive sometimes, however, to carry the wheels with their sledges; but this is disagreeable, and adds much to the weight of their equipage, and to their expence. The post regulations are very exact; and according to the size of the carriage, and baggage, and number of passengers, the

the number of horses specified must be taken and paid for. I have noticed a very disingenuous conduct, even in many persons of rank, in regard to those matters. Every traveller must have an order for post-horses from the governor of the town from whence he journeys; and in this order is mentioned the sort of carriage, baggage, and number of horses required: but a false account is for the most part given, that an order may be got for as few horses as possible, to evade expence; and this occasions eternal riots with the post-masters, who, though they have it in their power to act agreeably to regulations lodged with them by government, yet are overawed by persons of rank.

The postmaster here is an Englishman: he is very obstinate with the Russians and others; and sometimes he exchanges blows with travellers who may be as obstinate in insisting upon what is wrong, as he upon what is right.

A thundering son of Mars was here lately. Without much ceremony he began to chastise the postillions, who all took refuge in

the woods. He then complained to the postmaster, that there was no person to drive his carriage. The postmaster reprimanded the colonel for beating the postillions, and threatened to send the gentleman a prisoner to Petersburg, which, he said, his orders fully entitled him to do with any person striking a postillion while under the eye of the postmaster. The colonel stormed, and endeavoured to terrify the postmaster into compliance with his humour: this would not do; and when the officer had calmed, the postmaster sent for the postillions, and they went with the colonel, who first came under a promise not to abuse them.

The Russian calendar is crowded with fast-days; but in winter they continue for six weeks at a time. This fortunately happens at a season when fish is in greater plenty, and cheaper than at any other; and such food alone is used during fast-days. I have no objections to keeping Lent; to abstain from animal food, and to consider this as a religious duty: but why do the Greeks and Latins return with such avidity to gormandising

dising and drunkenness? nay, even during fast-days, the priests as well as laity indulge in potent libations. There is an inconsistency in affecting to abstain from one or two gratifications of sense, while the grossest appetites are frequently indulged without controul by way of compensation. There are few religious sects who have not such inconsistencies and absurdities. That religion which requires few priests, the inventors of crafty ceremonies, will always be found to be the best, because simplicity of manner in worship is most agreeable to the law of nature, and of course to the God of nature. A cheerful heart is a prayer: a good conscience adoration. The forms of religious duties should be few and simple, and they will then be sincere. Ceremony has ever been an enemy to sincerity.

Saturday evening last, I went, accompanied by an acquaintance and a Russian naval officer, to the monastery of St. Sergius. It was to observe the ceremonies of the Greek church, in commemoration of the resurrection of our Saviour. That monastery is situated in a wood upon the shore of the

gulph of Finland. We proceeded on foot by the edge of the forest leading to this sacred spot: it was the dead of night; the weather stormy and cold: the moon shot her beams through the trees—she had just risen from the plain behind them. We arrived at the wall-gates of St. Sergius, which were shut—the monks were asleep; and the watchman told us we could not obtain admittance but by an order from the superior. One of the monks looked out from the window of his cell; and being soon admitted, we were invited by the monk to take shelter from the bitter blast, under his roof. His bed, spread upon a bench, took up the greatest part of the room: on a shelf were placed a few volumes in the Russian language, a loaf of bread and a basin of milk. He offered to entertain us with what he had. The monks here are not so wealthy, and cannot afford to live so luxuriously as they do in other countries. The clock struck one!—the monk crossed himself, and heaved a deep sigh. We heard the cannon at Petersburg announce the glorious moment! The bells of the monastery

tery were set a-ringing, to give notice to the monks and the neighbouring villagers. We were now allowed to enter the outer hall of the chapel, in which glimmered two or three dismal tapers, just enabling us to see a sacred painting, to which the monks and peasants bowed, and crossed themselves, as they entered. After waiting here a considerable time, we were admitted into the chapel, where the priest of the white, or clergyman, read the service in a very rapid manner, and the monks or priests of the black chanted hymns. On a table was spread a picture representing the body of Christ. Three monks of the higher orders, dressed in their official habits, carried it away as if for interment. From the altar ascended a cloud of incense, and the bishops taking the salver threw the perfume upon the sacred paintings and among the people. They went in procession to different parts of the monastery, throwing incense upon the pictures of the saints—the people followed. The monks remaining in the chapel, assisted by young boys, chanted hymns. The chapel was lighted up with innumera-

ble wax candles, whose flame, reflected from the gilded paintings and other ornaments, shewed the sacred magnificence of the place. The howling of the winds without doors, and the transient moon-beam, gave additional solemnity to this midnight-scene.

The chief bishop prayed, and sung hymns in the inner temple at the altar.—The candles were mostly extinguished—the bishops brought forth the cross—the people crowded around them to kiss both the cross and the bishops. *Christus vobis, i. e.* Christ is risen! resounded from every mouth—the people kissed one another. The priests are now satisfied with harmless incense. They formerly delighted in sprinkling human blood upon the altars, and the God of mercy was worshipped by mitred furies, holding up to him the entrails of his creatures! The power which religious fanaticism has over the minds of the herd of mankind, no doubt gave the first idea to crowned heads of uniting the offices of priest and king. Odin was the chief priest as well as sovereign of the north. The simple offerings of fruits and flowers were disused after his arrival,
and

and incense produced from offerings more becoming a warrior priest and king. The northern priests, from this example, covered the altars upon every occasion with blood. The captives in time of war, or slaves in time of peace, were the ordinary victims; but the priests were not always satisfied with such mean offerings. In great calamities, when the people thought they had some occasion to attribute them to the king, even him they sacrificed as the highest offering in order to obtain divine favour. In this manner, Mallet, the first king of Verm-land, was burnt in honour of Odin, to put an end to a great dearth, as we read in the History of Norway. The kings in their turn did not spare the blood of their subjects, and many of them even shed the blood of their children. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son a sacrifice to obtain a victory over his enemy Harold. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life. The ancient history of Norway abounds in similar examples. These victims

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head.

head. The blood flowing from the victims in a greater or less quantity prefaged good or bad; and it was sprinkled among the people, upon the sacred groves, upon the altars, upon the walls of the temples, and upon the images of their gods.

We returned home about five o'clock in the morning—the sun reddened in the east. I went to bed, but was soon awakened from sleep with voices singing along the road. It was a party of Russian girls, who gave kisses and demanded them of every person they met. *Christus vobis!* re-echoed from every quarter. These rejoicings continued for a week.

Sways are erected in the Russian villages: the lads and lasses are seated upon a broad deal board, suspended horizontally by ropes to a cross beam above, fixed to two posts stuck in the earth. The company sing while they are sawing the air. Two girls stand, one upon each end of the plank, and give it motion, by pressing the weight of their bodies alternately upon the ends where they are placed. Others get into carts, and drive them about the villages; the young
nymphs

nymphs and swains exerting their vocal powers in their best manner, and clothed in their most gaudy trappings. The older people get drunk, and are every where tumbling about the highways; the more sober are seen supporting their drunken friends.

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LETTER XXXIV.

Contrast of Climates and Manners.—Peter I. imports foreign Birds into Russia to inhabit the Forests.—Of Birds, Natives of Russia.—Russian Climate, and of the best Means to preserve Health in Northern Regions.—Settlements of Europeans in Greenland.

Ingria, May 1791.

THIS is the second winter in which I have trode the Scythian snows, and heard rude Boreas thundering around me in his native kingdoms. The sun is upon his annual visit to the antarctic pole, and has left us to grope our way amidst the northern lakes and woods. The arctic hemisphere is crufted over with ice; the woods are planted in crystal fields; the wild animals with cautious steps walk along the slippery desert.

Peter I., as if to cheer the dismal scene furrounding his capital city, did not confine his improvements to the earth alone; he imported a variety of birds, natives of southern

ern climates, and gave them the northern skies to range in. While the summer lasted, they produced a new melody in the Finland woods; but no sooner did grim winter approach than they fled or perished: yet even here, besides the nightingale, are native songsters having the sweetest notes, the black-bird, the thrush, and, what will amaze you more than all these, the Finland sparrow. This species of the sparrow is decorated with the most lively and beautifully coloured plumage, and the age of the bird is known by the annual changes in its liveries: their notes are loud and shrill; but those I have seen being caught when old, I had no opportunity of observing if they were easily taught to imitate sounds: their natural songs however abundantly repay the charge of keeping them prisoners. They rattle their chains, and make the house echo with native woodland ditties.

The vocal performers are not numerous in the northern ærial orchestra; and to this scarcity may be attributed the severe laws against the destroyers even of rooks: indeed,

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unless this species are very numerous, they are as necessary in aërial concerts as bass players in our operas : nor do I know to which to give preference ; to the spring music of the linnet and the lark, or to the autumnal oratorios of the crows, while I wander through the forest. But my favourite bird is the snow-bird of Russia, of the same family, I presume, with robin red breast. His visits are limited to the winter season. When the nightingale, the linnet, the black-bird, the thrush, have deserted the Russians ; when the bear and wolf have retreated for shelter to their caves ; the snow-birds, clothed in white robes, undistinguishable from the powdered bushes on which they rest their feet, come in millions, and chirp upon every naked tree and shrub. In return for this friendly society, the murderous gun and villanous net are used by the human natives to destroy them, and the tables of the voluptuary smoke with this sacrifice. The snow-bird is of a very small and delicate shape, nearly resembling those from the islands of Canary.

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necessary : commodious houses were built, and plentifully stored with all manner of cured provisions, clothes, firewood, &c. The colonists no doubt had enjoyed themselves; carousing within doors; and frequently getting drunk: when the vessels arrived the ensuing season from Holland, the colonists were found dead in their huts, having evidently died of scorbutic diseases, occasioned not less from eating salted meats than from drinking spirituous liquors, and indulging themselves in those lazy habits, the ordinary result of intemperance and of scorbutic affections.

In the last century eight Englishmen were left accidentally by their ships in Greenland, destitute of every necessary, without a house, and with no other clothes than the jackets upon their backs. Necessity, the parent of invention, made a house of their boat : with this, which they placed bottom upwards, securing themselves from the encroachment of cold by boards and moss, they made shift to live with tolerable comfort. A few articles which they had in the boat when separated from the ship, as pieces
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of iron, a hatchet, a musket, a kettle, &c. enabled them to make some other necessary implements to dress their victuals, and the musket to kill bears and seals, which they fed upon; and hunger made them relish those unsavoury messes, and without any prior pickling of any kind: but it was this circumstance, the being deprived of salt, which preserved their lives; the extreme frost did not require the assistance of salt in curing meats; and if salt is prejudicial in cold countries, the inhabitants of them can do very well without it. The Greenland fishers arriving in the summer found those accidental colonists in good health, and as fat and fair as the sharp climate, and bears' furlouns with a sharp appetite could make them.

The Russians several times attempted in vain to settle a few colonists in Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen, to which, however, they yearly go in parties to hunt and fish. It happened, about thirty or forty years ago, that remaining too long in the country, their vessels were surrounded and frozen in the fields of ice. They fortunately recovered

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from their ships the most considerable part of the materials. They constructed a house, which they understood how to secure against the cold, better than the English mariners; and besides that, they knew how to build a stove, the only possible expedient to preserve warmth in northern apartments. With all these advantages the Russians cast a lingering look, during the eight long years of their confinement, towards their native country, and to that quarter of the ocean, upon which they expected vessels to appear: the short summers soon passed away, and the winters again involved them in darkness and despair. They maintained themselves as well as they could with wild animals caught with snares, a method they had learned at home, and which here was very requisite, as they had but a small quantity of powder: they likewise caught in the season a sufficient stock of fish for the winter. Their salt and spirits were soon expended: the frost cured their provisions, and even Russians learned to be healthful and warm without either salt or brandy; and although
several

several died of scorbutic habits, which are nourished chiefly by laziness, the being deprived of their favourite messes and brandy unquestionably preserved the lives of those who remained, at the arrival of a ship from Archangel. It is worth recording, that upon their arrival at Archangel, the wife of one of the people, who had long deplored the loss of her husband, supposed to have been lost at sea, observing, and just recollecting her husband, as he landed, ran up to him and fainted in his arms. These examples prove, in the most convincing manner, that the use of spirituous liquors, as well as of too much salt, is prejudicial to the constitution in cold countries; and that exercise, next to wholesome provisions, is the best preserver of every animal's existence.

I do not remember to have noticed any observation in regard to what is the warmest dress for the human or other bodies. I think that a coat or covering of feathers would exceed, in warmth, any other clothing. I draw this conclusion from the circumstance of the snow-bird

wandering through the coldest skies, and even delighting in them, while the wildest quadruped that treads the northern desert seeks shelter in the caves of mountains or in the recesses of the forest. This clothing could not be fitted to the human body so conveniently as our linens, cottons, silks, and woollens, and the furs of quadrupeds. This must be the reason that the northern nations are not clothed *à la mode des oiseaux*. Were the feathered creation generally as large in size as quadrupeds, and could they be stripped of the skin and feathers in the same manner as quadrupeds of their skin and hair, it would then be equally commodious to wear the one or the other. Furs would be of small use, if the hair was torn from the skin, however ingeniously it might be put upon woollen cloth or other stuff: the feathers or hair once displaced can never assume again the elegance and warmth which the hand of nature gave them.

But why do I lecture upon heat to a Briton, who despises all warmth, unless what he derives from political discussions

upon the nature of liberty? He persists in following the example of his ancestors, who marched naked: we are still naked though not painted Britons. Even the British ladies will not wear a fur cloke; yet, as if they wished to shew that they meant no disrespect to old Winter, they take notice of him as he passes; they pay him the compliment to wear an edging of fur round their gowns, and condescend too to wear a muff. The winter dress of Britons is rather the etiquette of fashion than clothing. We are almost ashamed to appear in a great coat. There is a considerable degree of foppery as well as hardness in this custom; and I believe that most of our young men of fashion would have no objection to a comfortable great coat, if they did not consider this appendage as hiding their elegant persons too much from public view. In walking, a great coat is less necessary; but in an open carriage, unless the weather is warm, it is absolutely so, when the body has little exercise, and the cold is increased by moving quickly, especially if the wind be in our

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face. Our charioteers, however, hang their great coats upon the back of their gigs, to shew at least that their difuse of clothes is not a stratagem to save money, or with any view to cheat the taylor or the manufacturer of employment. The many diseases originating in these foolish practices among my countrymen, make the subject interesting, and induce me to dwell the more particularly upon it.

LETTER XXXV.

*Contrast of Character of different Nations—
the English—the Germans—the Russian
Men and Women.—Customs and Manners
of the Russians.—Erroneous Opinions of se-
veral Writers respecting the Character of
the Russians.*

St. Petersburg, May 1791.

THIS metropolis is a collection of all na-
tions—of native Scythians, and of the de-
scendants of the ancient Scythians, who
emigrated from their country, and are now
returning back in small parties under their
new names, of English, Scotch, Germans,
&c.

The original inhabitants, who still re-
main in Scythia, stare at their brethren,
who have learned various arts, invented by
the necessities to which their vagrant emi-
grations naturally subjected them. Their
fathers wonder at the improvements of these
travellers, and copy from their sons. They

are cutting down their forests, and building cities; tilling the ground, sowing and reaping. The coarse skins of animals are exchanged for clothing of woollen manufacture.

It is a curious contrast, to see upon one hand the European artist working with numerous and the finest tools, and the Scythian constructing every thing he wants with the ax and hammer only. He fells the trees and builds a house in the course of a day or two; he furnishes it with equal expedition. His vessels are constructed and launched as if by magic. What then is the superiority of European arts? Luxury puts in a word, and illustrates these advantages. Ambition secunds her with powerful arguments.

Considering the shortness of life, we have put ourselves to a vast trouble in contriving conveniences we are not to enjoy. Were we contented with simplicity, we might have more time to study the best of all arts and sciences, moral wisdom. But the tide of ease, and elegance, and taste, as they are called, is not to be stemmed: so, taking the world as it goes, I will quietly embark upon

on this fashionable stream, and away as the current drives me.

Men possess various characters, as government, climate, and other circumstances give the inclination. Women, more uniformly occupied in one pursuit, that of household œconomy and the care of their children, have more uniform characters; and as they are naturally more mild in their disposition, they have every superiority to us in those arts which render society most agreeable. The contrast betwixt the husband and wife of Russia is striking: conceive to yourself a young lamb in the paws of a bear; I speak of the common ranks: yet the Russian is very amorous, and as fond and placable as his nature will admit.

Marriage would be the happiest of all states, if it were possible to have a wife as handsome as the English and German, and as mild and loving as the Russian ladies.

The Russian husband, with all his boorishness, is not so anxious to shew his authority as the wife to shew her obedience. It is rather distressing to see the meek creature carefully picking her steps behind those of

her bearded lord; watching his looks, and actuated by the same pains and pleasures. The amorous complexion of the Russian males for their women renders this haughty demeanour unaccountable. How shall we explain the mystery? I suppose it arises from the ancient form of patriarchal government. As the Russians are fond husbands, their importance is no doubt rather assumed from custom than inclination.

It is a cursed custom which obliges a man to assume a distance from the lovely partner of his life; but if wives, thus treated, are the mildest and most obedient, the custom will not seem so absurd. The truth is however, that custom, more than any distinction in the nature of mankind, regulates every thing. An English woman is not bred up from her infancy to live in fear of awful man: a Russian woman is taught from her childhood her inferiority to the male: an English woman will not therefore submit to the same treatment from her husband; nor will harsh treatment have the same effect upon her as upon the Russian wives.

The

but The married women in this country, to shew that they have quitted the vanities of the sex upon their wedding-day, tie up ever afterwards their flowing hair beneath the napkin, which is the universal head-dress. However, they preserve the right of ornamenting their clothes with gold lace, and are very fine on holidays. It would appear that to be fat, is esteemed to be beautiful; the married are generally as round as good living can make them: this habit of body certainly defends from the cold, and thereby serves a double purpose.

and The Russians, like all Asiatic nations, are full of compliment and ceremony. A common boor will continue half an hour recording your titles, and loading you with his good breeding. This seems inconsistent with his rough manners; he cannot help his awkwardness and roughness in the midst of all this: his awkwardness is the quality of his body; his civility the quality of his mind: or, let it be granted, that his ceremonious civility, like that of more civilized nations, is without any meaning, the Russians are not worse than they are. The
women

women are still more civil than the men ; their discourse from beginning to end is one continued compliment : they salute you at every period by bowing their head ; and continue smiling, and talking, and bowing, not knowing when or where to stop.

There is one circumstance much to be regretted ; the prevailing custom of painting their faces : it hides a lively and animated countenance as with a mask : and even the fallow hue given them by the heat of their stoves, would, with the aid of such animation, be more inviting than the plastered visage acquired by the use of rouge.

What is remarkable, while the Russian female is whitening and reddening her cheeks, she is at the same time employed in blackening her teeth ; which have, from this abominable practice, the most disgusting appearance, and give the idea of disease every time they open their mouths. When I asked them the reason, they said it was the fashion of their country ; and others replied, that the teeth of brute animals were white. I have been told, that the Hindoo ladies affect to have their teeth black. To paint

paint red and white is an attempt to imitate the colours of health; but the black tint has no reference to taste, or reason, or life. Such is the slavery of fashion or old custom, in high as well as in low life.

The Russian women are very small in stature, yet neat and handsome while unmarried; and at all ages cleanly in their persons. They are as proud of small feet as the Chinese ladies; and they are poor indeed, who have not clean white stockings every day. This people, men and women, are no way anxious, like other northern nations, to display their hardiness by going without clothes: the female, less exposed than the man, is more slightly habited; yet due attention is paid by the women of all ranks to defend themselves from the severity of the climate.

Most writers upon this nation have described them as possessing rather passive than active valour. It is so far true, that the Russian soldier is passive in respect to the orders of his general, and knows not how to disobey: but every one acquainted with them knows with what joy they receive an order

order to march to an attack. Passive valour may answer in the open field of battle, army against army; but in scaling walls something more is required. I need only mention Oczakow and Ismael to bring to every one's recollection the active courage of the Russians. In fact, they have something more than active courage, and possess too great a degree of ferocity. A Russian peasant and a Russian soldier are very different beings: the former never receives an order for an attack to give him the opportunity of displaying his natural disposition; and his passiveness in a situation he cannot mend by active virtues, has given him a fictitious appearance and a fictitious character.

A Russian, in the habit from his infancy to look upon his lord and emperor as gods, has no more idea of breaking this chain of thought, than a prisoner of breaking the strongest real chains with which every limb is riveted. Both the peasant and the prisoner may, notwithstanding this, inherit very active dispositions.

L E T-

LETTER XXXVI.

Of the most celebrated Travellers to the North.

—Account of Lapland and of the Laplanders.—Climate of Lapland—Houses—Provisions.—Reflections upon the best Method of improving and cultivating barbarous Nations.—Lapland Commerce.—Manner of Travelling.

May 1791.

TARTARY is the mother country of Europe, and particularly of the northern parts: the natives of Tartary form the first shade; those of the banks of the Wolga and the middle regions of Siberia, the second; and the inhabitants of Lapland, of Samoieda, Jakutza and the other countries upon the Frozen Ocean, the third and darkest shade. Removed from the eye of the civilized nations of Europe, little is known concerning them. Here are few productions to invite, and the difficulty of communication,

munication prevents the intercourse with foreigners. Commercial intercourse, which has opened all nations to each other, is shut by frozen seas or by immense deserts. Mankind have found out the abodes of mankind in searching for gold and silver, not from a thirst of knowledge: it is Philosophy which has explored shores and wildernesses where knowledge alone is to be found. M. Gmelin, M. Pallas, Muller, Steller, and Krascheninikoff, have explored, at the desire and at the expence of Her Imperial Majesty, the northern deserts of Siberia and Kamtschatka. Linnæus, Maupertuis, Thrud, Leem, Le Monnier, and Jutterberg, have given the best accounts of Lapland. It is chiefly from the accounts of these writers, and from personal conversation with other travellers into Siberia, that I have drawn anecdotes of the people of that country.

Russia, when it added a part of Swedish Finland to its territory, added likewise a proportion of the rocks and snow of Swedish Lapland bordering upon the White Sea. Lapland, the utmost extremity of Scandinavia,

navia, is divided between Denmark, Sweden, and Russia: the inhabitants are a distinct people from the Russians, Swedes, and Danes. Conceive to yourself a country formed as it were by a collection of mountains from all the other parts of the world, and covered, or rather loaded, with ice and snow, from the pole—this is Lapland. Conceive too the most uncouth squat figure possible, clothed in dirty skins of beasts—this is the Laplander. But this country, say the natives, was the paradise in which our first parents dwelt, and from which all nations have their origin. Placed upon the top of the globe, they esteem themselves *above* all mankind. They are of divine origin! Probably the gods of the ancients were supplied from Lapland: their chief arts at this day prove them of celestial breed: they are manufacturers of thunder, lightning, hail, and storms. With all these accomplishments, the rein-deer is certainly the most valuable and respectable inhabitant of Lapland.

The Laplanders, entirely unacquainted
with

with agriculture, are all huntsmen and fishermen. Their southern masters have made several fruitless attempts to cultivate the natives and their soil: not only their prejudices, but the pole must be removed, before they can succeed in either attempt. It has been observed by one of the writers upon Lapland, that Nature, carefully overlooking her works, and that none of them, however barren and inhospitable, be altogether deserted, has certainly directed the flight of innumerable birds of passage to Lapland in summer. But how shall we account for the residence of men in these frozen regions? how shall we account for the preference which the human natives give this country to all others? It is possible to entice the Italian from Italy, but not the Laplander from his mountains, rocks, and wreaths of snow. The German, the Spaniard, the Portuguese, the French, and even the Briton, is for ever changing his country. Is this a proof that nature is best satisfied with simplicity or with luxury? Were simplicity of manners accompanied with cleanliness of person

person and dress, and free from grovelling superstition, such situation perhaps would be most enviable, and most consistent with the nature of happiness.

A winter of nine months' continuance forbids every attempt to cultivate the soil; which, besides, is poor and thin. The Laplanders too, approving themselves the genuine descendants of the Tartars, detest agricultural labours. The Swedish government placed small colonies of farmers in that quarter of Lapland belonging to it: they cleared the grounds, they tilled and sowed, but did not reap. They distressed the natives by setting the woods on fire, the shelter of the beasts upon which they greatly depend for subsistence, as well as deprived them of a necessary, and the only fuel they have. The intentions of the Swedes were humane; but it is impracticable to render the Laplanders any service in this way: it remains only to assist them in making their situation as comfortable as their country and climate will admit of.

June, July, and August, are the only

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months

months during which the lands are without a covering of snow, and the lakes and rivers, of ice. This is consequently the season of grazing their herds, and for fishing. The rivers produce great variety of fish, and the ocean upon their coasts such as furnish oil, used by the natives both as food, and for their lamps to light up within their huts the dreary winter.

With September winter approaches: the snowy showers and chilling frosts again take possession of the land and seas. The herds of rein-deer are folded, and the Laplander kindles a fire in his hut to warm himself. The construction of their huts does no credit to the ingenuity of the natives, who in some other instances discover a considerable degree of ability. The Lapland winter hut is exactly the figure of a cone or sugar loaf, constructed by means of poles stuck in the earth, forming a circle and inclining nearly to a point at the top: these poles are covered upon the outside with moss and earth, and towards the bottom to a great thickness. Snow and ice is the last flating which
the

the hut receives. The inhabitants have not always sufficient room to stand upright within these awkward mansions; and, to add to their inconvenience, they are involved in a continued cloud of smoke, the essence of wet fuel. The fire is made directly under an aperture at the top of the hut, which serves rather to let in the cold, than to let out the smoke. The door is a small hole at the lower side of the hut, through which the Laplander and his family enter or go out upon all fours. This family, rolled up in furs, sleep around the fire, fomented with the smoke and various scents inclosed in their lodging. Their winter provisions, consisting of fish, whale oil, and the flesh of wolves, elks, and bears, being cellared in the corner of the hut, afford very delicious flavours: but all this, the smoke no doubt excepted, is Lapland luxury; and when compared to what is called luxury in other parts of the world, it will puzzle the most profound naturalist to decide which is which. By luxury are certainly meant increased enjoyments of whatever sort we

F f 2

think

think sweetest to our senses. The luxuries of polished nations have effeminated them, and with increased momentary fits of happiness have increased their diseases, and shortened the period of their lives. The luxury of a Laplander is, to be wrapped in furs during winter, to scorch some favourite part of his body at the fire, to eat bears' flesh, and to drink whale oil: as these luxuries do not increase his diseases, nor shorten the period of his existence, I should, for my own part, esteem the Lapland luxury the best.

It is a grand rule among politicians, that to make a people industrious the best method is, to increase their wants, by giving them a taste for something they did not know of before. It might however have been a prudent conduct in the Russians, Danes, and Swedes, to have considered, first, what was in the power of the Laplanders to obtain by additional industry. Without considering this circumstance, the same political rule may destroy one people while it raises another. For instance, the
foil

foil of Lapland, of the countries bordering upon the Northern ocean, Samoyedi, Tungoufi, Yukaghiri, to the farthest corners of the European and Asiatic continent to the north and east, Tchuktchi, Thoriaki, and Kamtschatka, are either altogether barren, or rendered by climate next to incapable of cultivation. I cannot perceive the propriety of introducing unknown luxuries into such countries, in exchange for which the inhabitants have nothing to spare, and can have nothing to spare even after the greatest exertions of industry. The three northern governments are highly culpable in permitting traders to enter among the natives of the pole. Nature has bestowed upon them a little; with that little they are satisfied, and they cannot have more, without parting with what makes them happy, in exchange for what makes them wretched.

A brandy merchant arrives in the northern deserts: his arrival is announced in every hut and village. The inhabitants crowd around him as a deity: they return repeatedly to their stores for the furs which

the hardships of many a long chase has procured to them : they give the most valuable furs for as much brandy as they can drink in a few minutes. They next give away the skins they use for clothing ; and the fish, their provision in winter, for another and another draught of brandy. The merchant demands a greater quantity of articles for his poison, as the thirst of his customers increases ; and many of them are unable to purchase the smallest quantity of meal, having expended their whole riches upon this bewitching liquor ; and given away furs from two to ten and twenty pounds value each for three or four shillings worth of brandy.

The introduction of luxuries, being attended with such fatal effects, ought instantly to be prohibited. The respective governments may render the natives much service, without urging them either to agricultural employments, or to drink brandy. To build for them convenient huts and villages ; and to force the people, if necessary, to dwell in such ; encouraging them at the same

same time by the example of settlers mixed with them, to domestic comfort and cleanliness, would be worthy the attention of the cabinet of the most mighty empire. These settlers would find abundance of employment in supplying the natives with meal and a few other necessaries ; and to which articles this commerce should be strictly limited. The natives of the Pole might be rendered happy at a small expence ; and the revenue in furs, which they do at present and can afford to give, would abundantly repay their sovereigns. Russia, Sweden, and Denmark have large tracts of land uncultivated in temperate climates ; let these be cultivated before they break up the soil beyond the arctic circle ; and where the soil and climate invite culture, they may apply with less danger luxury as a stimulus to the husbandman. Yet, perhaps, if luxury were banished every climate ; or, if happiness were sought after as the only and best luxury ; increased population might answer the purpose of a stimulus, when there was a full demand for all products ; and increased po-

pulation must necessarily succeed when other luxuries are banished, since these have notoriously destroyed the generative faculties of the body, as well as those of the mind.

The Laplander has few things to spare: a little oil and fish, some furs and wooden utensils; in the making of which, having very ordinary instruments, they shew much ingenuity. What they have to spare, and something more, they exchange with the Swedes and Danes, chiefly for brandy and other liquors; and, besides giving a very high value, consume a great deal of time, and undergo great fatigue and danger to obtain them.

The Laplanders are not entirely shut up in their huts during winter; they venture abroad at times to catch the bear, who at this season lies dozing in his cavern. Others, still more adventurous, journey in sledges drawn by rein-deer, across the frightful mountains separating Lapland from Norway and Sweden, and carry various articles to market. If we are to credit

dit Lænius, from the specimens he has given the world of Lapland poetry, the Laplanders hazard too the most perilous and distant journies to visit their sweet-hearts.

"Haste, haste, my rein-deer! let us quickly go
Our am'rous journey o'er the dreary waste:
Haste, my rein-deer! still, still, thou art too slow,
Impetuous love demands the lightning's haste."

SPECTATOR.

Le Monnier thus relates a journey in a sledge drawn by rein-deer: "The machine
"this animal draws is a sort of boat, scarce
"large enough to hold the half of one's
"body. As this travelling in the snow is
"a kind of navigation; that the vessel
"may suffer the less resistance in its course,
"it has a sharp head, and a keel like an or-
"dinary boat, upon which it tumbles or
"rolls from side to side. If the traveller is
"not very attentive to the management of
"the sledge, and keeping himself properly
"balanced in his seat, he is in danger
"every moment of being thrown out. The
"rein-deer is harnessed to the sledge by a
"single thong of leather made fast to the
"animal's

“ animal’s neck. When he finds himself
“ upon a beaten road he runs with incredi-
“ ble fury : it is needless to attempt to stop
“ him in his career ; and to pull the reins
“ which are fixed to his horns. This serves
“ but to render him more furious, to run
“ out of the road, or to kick at you with his
“ heels. In the last event, the person in the
“ sledge turns it over himself as a buckler
“ against this assault ; or else by drubbing
“ the rein-deer with a stick, which at the
“ same time is necessary to direct the sledge,
“ and to keep it clear of the trunks of trees.

“ The first part of our journey from the
“ hut was performed in a moment ; the
“ motion of the sledge was quick as the
“ flight of birds ; and although there was
“ no beaten track upon the mountain’s side,
“ yet we were carried to its top very ra-
“ pidly. The rein-deer, while we remain-
“ ed, dug deep holes in the snow with their
“ hoofs, and browsed the moss upon the
“ rocks beneath it. The Laplander made
“ a great fire, but the cold was so excessive,
“ that

“ that the heat could reach but a small distance; and though it melted the snow immediately around, this was again soon frozen into a hearth of ice.

“ If our journey up hill had been painful, our concern now was, lest our return down should be too rapid. The descent was steep; and the sledge, though partly sunk among the snow, slid of itself. Imagine to yourself our situation, drawn along by the same furious animals; which sinking in the snow to their bellies, endeavoured to save themselves by their fleetness. We soon found ourselves at the bottom of the hill; and in a moment afterwards, we had passed the great river, and come to the place from whence we had set out: we made haste to get back to the Torneo; which at our arrival, 30th December, had a most frightful appearance. The little houses were buried in snow; which, if there had been any daylight, must have effectually shut it out. The snow continually falling, or ready to fall, hid the sun for the few moments he

“ remained above the horizon. In Janu-
“ ary the cold was increased to such an ex-
“ tremity that M. Reaumur’s thermometer,
“ which at Paris in the great frost 1709
“ it was thought strange to see fall to 14°
“ below the freezing point, was now got
“ down to 37° . The spirit of wine in the
“ others froze. If we opened the door of
“ a warm room, the external air instantly
“ converted the vapour of it into snow,
“ whirling it round in white vortexes. If
“ we went out, we felt as if the air was
“ tearing our breasts asunder. The solitude
“ of the streets was not less than if the inha-
“ bitants had been all dead. In this coun-
“ try, you may often see people who have
“ had a leg or an arm frozen off. Some-
“ times the cold, always very great, in-
“ creases to such sudden and violent fits, as
“ are generally fatal to those who happen
“ to be exposed to it. At other times,
“ tempests of snow arise still more danger-
“ ous: the winds, seeming to blow from
“ every quarter at once, toss about the snow
“ with

"with such fury that in a moment all the
"roads are lost."

Such is a Lapland winter! The soul is
chilled with the idea of it, and retreats to
more hospitable climes.

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LETTER XXXVII.

Account of Lapland continued.—New Code of Laws.—Natural History of the Rein-deer, the most useful Animal of the Brute Creation.—Customs and Manners, of the Laplanders.—Error of M. Maupertuis.—Lapland Manufactures.—Of wild Animals common to this Country.—Specimen of Lapland Poetry.—Economy of Nature.—Manner of Fishing and Hunting—Cookery—Diseases.—Plan to render the Laplanders more comfortable in their native Country.

Ingria, May 1791.

I HAVE got into a talking humour about Lapland: this country and its inhabitants, at a very early period of life, attracted my attention; I searched for every information relating to them: I hope soon to view them with my eyes. I will solicit her Imperial Majesty

Majesty to make me prince and governor of Lapland, and be satisfied with a very small revenue: in return I will teach them to be truly happy, even in the midst of their snows. As a specimen of my legislative abilities, the following laws and regulations shall instantly take place upon my appointment.

1st. The books of laws and government of all other nations, imported or smuggled into Lapland, to be forfeited to the prince, and carefully locked up by him in a strong iron chest, which shall be called *Pandora's Box*: these books never to be read or removed, nor the name of the box changed, until the nations they relate to can demonstrate that they are happy, and in consequence of the strict observance and execution of their laws.

2dly. The importation of brandy and all spirituous and intoxicating liquors prohibited upon pain of death.

3dly. The Laplanders shall have freedom in the utmost extent of that word: their old laws, religion, customs and manners.

ners. Their prince shall only endeavour to prevail upon them to alter these when they are evidently wrong or filthy, by placing among them young Laplanders educated under his own inspection, and whose examples they will undoubtedly follow, when they see how much happier the change in their household accommodations, their dress and manners; comparing them to the circumstances in which they had themselves seen the young Laplanders before they had been taken to be educated.

4thly. All succeeding princes shall, under forfeiture of the crown, observe and confine themselves to the above three *regulations*, and never make any alterations or additions whatever, until a general assembly is held in Lapland, of one representative from every nation upon earth; and unless a majority of these can agree in two points, what is happiness and what is liberty, the *three regulations* shall still remain in force. This I am determined shall constitute my whole code of laws, and the only addition to those simple ones which the natives already have
among

among them. Murder is punished by death; theft by restoring the property stolen or its value, and most other crimes by the shame and infamy attending the detection of them. To the honour of many of the northern nations, the accustomary oath among them was, "May shame be my punishment if I lie!" This oath regarded giving testimony in whatever cause their evidence was demanded.

Perhaps it may be deemed a symptom of tyranny, that, in writing of my kingdom in expectancy, I begin the history of the brute animal creation in Lapland, in preference to the history of human animals. I will not affect to deny, that the rein-deer, in the present state of things, must remain, for some time, the most respectable of my subjects; and without forcing him to speak, I may draw from his history and example instruction to mankind, and in particular to my intended subjects.

The rein-deer is a varying species of the deer kind peculiar to Lapland; they are the chief dependence and riches of the Lap-

landers, and are esteemed by them as money is by other nations. The rein-deer are the Laplander's horses; they draw their carts and sledges: they are their cows; they live upon their flesh and their milk: they are their sheep; they are clothed with their skins: and their gods too; the rein-deer star is worshipped by the Laplanders. In their solemn sacrifices the horns of the rein-deer are offered as the most precious gift. The ancients gave place to their heroes, the murderers of mankind, among the stars. I will say nothing of the comparative merits of the rein-deer and the hero, for apartments in the skies.

The food of the rein-deer is moss; and here nature has provided for them abundance of this vegetable: but the frozen snow, during the long winter, covering it to such a depth, renders it very difficult to be had at this season: the Laplanders are therefore very careful in gathering and preserving the moss for their herds; they treat it nearly in the same manner as we do hay, making it up into ricks in autumn. They take from
2 these

these ricks, after it has sufficiently dried, such a quantity within doors, as may serve a week. This moss hay is first washed in boiling water, before it is given to cows or sheep: it is besides mixed with a little salt and meal, to render it palatable to animals that have not been accustomed to such provender. The moss, thus prepared, becomes very nourishing and wholesome: the mutton fed with it is very sweet and juicy, and the milk of the cows is greatly increased. Neither cows nor sheep are natives of Lapland; they are imported from Norway, Sweden, or Russia; and although, in summer, parts of the country produce a little grass, they could never survive the winter without this care and method for their sustenance.

The rein-deer requires not this care in regard to food. He prefers eating the moss when it is fullest of juices, which would kill the other animals; and rather than eat the dried moss with meal and salt, he greedily seizes every opportunity, when out of doors, to search for his favourite provender, in its

primitive state, and, removing the snow with his hoofs, certainly finds it. He smells the moss, however deeply buried under the snow, and never digs where it is not to be found. When the weather permits in winter, the herdsmen take the rein-deer to the field: if they refuse to dig, he knows that no moss is in it, and conducts them to others, until the rein-deer stop of themselves and dig. This practice saves the hay for severe weather, when the herds cannot with safety be allowed to go abroad; to such extremes of cold is this country exposed. Sometimes the moss is scarce in the fields, and the hay of consequence exhausted at home. This is the only circumstance which obliges the Laplander to kill this useful animal; and when they can no longer provide milk, butter, and cheese to their master, they yield up their life.

This noble creature not only serves every purpose which the brute creation answer to mankind, but in several instances is his guardian and adviser. In the long journeys to Russia, Sweden, and Norway, during the cold

cold season, the Laplanders are frequently involved in those whirlwinds of snow described by M. Maupertuis: the sagacious rein-deer smells the coming storm: he shews expressive signs of fear, and proceeds with reluctance. The Laplander knows the value and truth of this prediction, and flies with his cattle to the first shelter, where, kindling a fire, he remains all night, or until the rein-deer shews an inclination to continue the journey; for these animals are anxious to go forward; no fatigue jades them, if the master allows them even a very moderate share of rest and provision. These journies are inconceivably dangerous: not only the whirlwinds are to be dreaded, but the precipices in the country are sometimes so disguised with the snow as not to be discovered. In journeying down a steep descent the rein-deer is placed behind the sledge, and the sledge runs of itself. The Laplander guides himself, in a country where there are no roads, by the stars, which serve to him as road posts; and while the rein-deer is carrying him over the earth, the

rein-deer star in heaven directs his course.

As the rein-deer is the chief wealth of the Laplanders, so he is, also, the only animal, except a few cows and sheep, that is domesticated: the herds will sometimes amount to several thousands. Few of the inhabitants have less than 40 or 50 in their herds. The Laplanders are less afraid of any personal evil to themselves, than of accidents and diseases to their rein-deer. This useful animal is in the summer season grievously afflicted by the musquitoes or gnats that swarm at this sultry season of the year. These insects drop their eggs among the hair upon the rein-deer's back; the egg quickly produces a worm, which working itself into the skin finds a lodging, to the great torment of the deer. At this unfortunate season, too, the rein-deer sheds his horns, and is thereby prevented from freeing himself of his tormentors. Sensible of the approaching danger, and of his incapacity to rub his enemy from their lodgements, he flies, his last resource, to the mountain tops, where

where the winter's cold is in part preserved. This climate is not visited by the gnat; or if some, more daring than ordinary, pursue the rein-deer even to his last retreat, he fees the coming foe, pricks up his ears, shakes his body, his head and his tail, and, snorting with the utmost violence; endeavours thus to frighten away the winged scorpions. He continues here, upon the defensive, for several days, nay for weeks together. He submits to remain in those cold quarters, and to the pangs of hunger, insensible to every torment but the gnat. It is only the wild rein-deer, however, that has it in his power to fly to the mountains: the others are carefully watched in summer, lest they likewise should take the same journey; yet the stupid Laplander uses no means for their relief. It is recommended by M. Juterbeg to anoint the bodies of the rein-deer, with a liquid composed of tar and milk: he adds, that the Laplanders use this preparation upon their skins, to defend themselves. It is wonderful indeed that they do not apply a remedy, found beneficial to their own

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bodies,

bodies, to their favourite rein-deer. "It is probable," says M. Juterbeg, "that the insect would cautiously avoid trusting its eggs to such a preposterous matrix, for every thing that is fat becomes mortal to insects by obstructing their pores." The backs of the rein-deer, and no doubt of the bear and other animals, are supposed to nourish the chrysalis of the gnat during winter; but surely the skins of all the quadrupeds in the creation could not contain those myriads of gnats which take wing in summer—the sky frequently becomes dark, obscured by a cloud of insects. I have witnessed this in the more southern parts of Russia; and as the heat of a Lapland summer exceeds that of Russian Ingria, the effects must be greater. I think the remedy of tar and milk might free the rein-deer of this disease, but not the northern climate of gnats. M. Maupertuis says, that he observed the surface of a lake in Lapland so covered with little yellowish grains, the size of a millet, that the water was discoloured with them. He took this for the chrysalis of some insect, which he
fancied

fancied was one kind of those flies which infested the rein-deer. This is a strange conjecture of M. Maupertuis. The flying fish is the only production of the waters, in my recollection, which visits the airy regions. The hairy backs of quadrupeds, and the cold surface of the lakes, are two such opposite nurseries, that we cannot reconcile for a moment the idea, that the tender chrysalis of winged insects, preserved by extreme heat, can be equally fostered in both situations.

It is agreed, that the eggs deposited in summer among the rein-deer's hair, produce the gnats the following summer: now, the same process being allowed with that of the eggs deposited in the lakes, what must become of the tender chrysalis when the waters are frozen? How different the lodging beneath the rein-deer's skin, and beneath or upon the frozen field of ice and snow!

I have noticed in Ingria, that where the lands are cultivated, and cleared of trees and brush-wood, the gnats are not so numerous as in the neighbourhood of forests; nay, the winged

winged clouds, which at times obscure the heavens, visibly ascend every day from the forests; a certain proof that they are the nurseries in winter of these tormentors, who in summer, too, receive shelter in them from the heat, as in the other season from the cold. The comparative number of eggs lodged in the backs of animals must be small to that in the crevices of the beech and fir-trees.

The Laplander and his rein-deer are so nearly connected together, that it would be a difficult attempt to treat of them separately. In summer the Lapland herdsmen erect near the best pastures, tents, and cover them with the skin of this useful creature, who had bled under his knife during a scarcity of provision in winter, and now shades his master from the sultry heat, while he tends the survivors of the herd. The fisherman likewise dwells *under the shade of the rein-deer*, while he prosecutes his occupation upon the lakes and rivers: nor does this animal merely serve as an article of use, but of ornament; the Lapland females draw
out

out his sinews into thread, which they have the art of gilding, and with this thread they embroider their clothes. It must be a very barren country indeed where a woman cannot find something with which to ornament her person. The rein-deer is to the Lapland females, what the silk-worm is to the Persian ladies. Nature supplies in every clime productions which, though apparently opposite in quality, answer nearly the same ends when aided by ingenuity and industry.

The animals common to Lapland, besides the rein-deer, are the bear, the wolf, the elk, the ermine: of these the Laplanders kill as many by hunting and otherwise as they can, for the sake of their flesh as well as of their skins. Winter is the season for hunting, and when the bear has retired to his cave, and the wolf and elk, pinched by hunger, assemble near the habitations of men. In summer the wild animals are more shy, and the human natives have neither horses nor hounds to pursue them. The bow and arrow, and snares, are the only instruments
made

made use of here in destroying the brute creation. To secure the bear is the most dangerous sport, notwithstanding he is feeble during the winter, and in spring owing to that torpid state in which he has passed the winter, and that, if we are to credit the naturalist, the only sustenance he has is in sucking his paws, raising thereby a froth upon them, which he licks. The wolf, of a very different complexion, prowls through the snowy wilderness: every creature is his prey; while the bear slumbers, he is the lion of the forest; the sole disturber of the night, while, as the Lapland poet writes,

"From th' icy valley howling to the morn."

Love and war have, from the beginning of the world, been the first subjects of poetry. The Laplanders have no state of warfare but with the bear, and with him they record their exploits. It is this animal alone who disputes with the Laplander the prize of courage. When the bear is conquered, a feast is prepared, and the following song is chanted in full chorus:

Of

Of all the forest beasts, on hill or plain,
 Thee we revere, though now subdu'd and slain.
 Thanks to the gods who sent such noble prey;
 Our huts are fill'd with health, our hearts with joy.
 Soon as the sun, the glorious lamp of day,
 Hides him behind the hills, and sheds his ev'ning ray,
 I'll hie me home; and mirth, all clad in flowers,
 Shall reign within my tent!—Sweet joy the hours
 Shall fill, for three long nights, within our doors.
 With transport we will climb the mountain's brow;
 Renew the chase those pleasures to renew.
Joy spreads around, joy brought this morning's light!
 And shall attend the closing of the night.
 With carols soft we shall enchant the bear;
 Our songs will prove how much we him revere;
 O glorious game, we still expect thee here. }

A Laplander, who has killed a bear, is
 forbid to lie with his wife for several suc-
 ceeding nights, probably upon the idea
 that his strength has been exhausted in
 such hazardous and laborious work.

It might be imagined that, in a country
 abounding with wild animals, the herds
 would often fall a prey to them. But these
 are defended by herdsmen; and the wolf,
 even pinched by severe hunger, is afraid of
 the human figure and voice; and when it
 is known that, in the inhabited parts of
 Africa,

Africa, even children armed with sticks chase away the lion, it will seem no way wonderful that wolves are kept at bay.

In summer the Laplanders are well supplied with food: earth, sea, and sky, offer them plenty; for, at this season, large flights of geese, ducks, and other birds, visit the country, and supply an additional dish to their more common ones from the rivers and woods. These birds leave the northern regions at the approach of winter, and the other animals would probably do so too had they wings, and were they not at the same time covered with warm furs. From this spontaneous larder the natives might lay up, for the cold season, when the seas and rivers, when earth and air, are shut against them, a sufficient quantity of provisions. The Laplanders have not the art of curing meat, and before they have consumed one half the other is rotten. Experience has proved that salted food is unwholesome, nay fatal, in extreme cold climates; yet it is remarkable, that the inhabitants of northern countries are the fondest
of

of salt dishes. The reverse is the case in hot countries, where salt is a natural production. Whether salted meat is the most wholesome dish for the natives of the lands which produce salt, or whether a moderate seasoning is best for all, I will not determine; nature, ever attentive to the preservation of her creatures, affords the northern nations an easy and ready method to cure their winter provisions, by exposing them to the frost. It would be well if the Laplanders would observe this method with the fish and fowl and other animals that are caught at the beginning and during winter, instead of keeping them within their huts, where, though there is not heat enough to warm themselves, there is enough to spoil their provisions; and the scents arising from the putrified stores could be suffered only by a Laplander, whose senses of feeling, taste, and smell seem exceedingly well adapted to the evils resulting, either from the climate, or from his lazy and dirty habits. He is more ingenious in catching than in curing food.

A Lap-

A Lapland fisher makes a hole in the ice of the lakes and rivers: through this he drops lines and nets. Their industry and œconomy are as surprising in some things, as they are neglected in others. They make an excellent glue of fish skins. They dry them: then they put them in cold water to soak, and to render it more easy to take off the scales. Several of the skins, thus prepared, are put into the rein-deer's bladder, in order that in the operation of boiling nothing but the steam may mix with them. Half an hour is allowed in boiling, particular care being taken to keep the skins under water. This ended, the bags are taken out, and the skins thus reduced to a glue of the very best quality.

In the chase the Laplander discovers still greater ingenuity than in fishing. He pursues the game upon wooden skaits. These are made of fir, about two feet in length, and half a foot in breadth, turning up at the ends. When the snow is frozen hard at the surface, the Laplander, by means of these skaits, appears to fly along, and with
amazing

amazing rapidity: but unless the snow is frozen hard, the snow-shoes serve rather to prevent him from sinking into it, than to expedite his journey; and while the frozen surface favours the pursuer, it prevents the animal pursued from escaping; as it is difficult to run upon a slippery road. Some writers record that the Laplander proceeds upon his skaits with the utmost rapidity down the mountain's side, or up the most craggy precipice, pushing himself along with a pole held in his hand. The absurdity of such expeditions is obvious. He must be a very wretched skaiter who accelerates his motion with a pole, and a very excellent one who can skait up a precipice. The pole serves the Laplander to prevent him at times from falling, and to stop short his expedition, as well as to strike the game when he has overtaken it.

As the women of Holland and other northern nations partake, and are equally skilful at these exercises as the men, so the Lapland females are expert at skaiting; but they do not frequently join in hunting or shoot-

ing with the arrow. The men not only monopolize the right of killing animals, but of cooking them. Like the Grecian heroes, they are famous for dressing pork-steaks. It is the post of honour in the house, to broil the hams of a bear or an elk upon the coals. Their messes are very delicious: they pound dried fish in a kind of mortar, with nearly an equal portion of the tender bark of the birch tree; this is baked into bread: but in wealthy families who indulge in luxurious living, a little oatmeal, or even flour, is added. Beef steaks they can eat very well without bread: this scarce article is seldom used but with milk or with broth. Their broth is thus prepared: the blood of the rein-deer is carefully preserved in his own bladder; when they wish to have broth, they add to a certain measure of blood, water and flour, which are boiled together.

The inhabitants of the north, particularly of Siberia, have a curious but simple method of making a sort of brandy. They put the grain of any kind they are possessed of under ground and in sacks, during the heat of summer.

summer. A fermentation soon takes place, and it becomes malt, which is then separated from the chaff by beating it in a wooden or stone mortar with a pestle. The malt, thus prepared, is baked into cakes by means of a little hot water, and afterwards dried. The spirit is made, when wanted, by steeping one or more cakes in boiling water, which is quickly impregnated, or converted into a strong liquor. The milk of the rein-deer is kept in different sorts of vessels for winter use: this milk is thickened with sorrel or berries. The frozen blood of that animal is the portable soup of the Laplanders: when either the frozen milk or blood is used, the quantity wanted is cut off with a knife. Excellent cheese is made during summer of the rein-deer's milk. What is eaten at this season is new cheese: they boil what is intended for freezing, as the cheese is so fat that it would hardly freeze without this operation.

Nor are the Laplanders less skilled in the art of dressing vegetables.—I see you smile while I am praising the Lapland arts. This

H h 2

smile

smile originates in a wrong idea of what good living consists in: the Lapland dishes supply food to the springs of life; the table of a modern epicure poison to every vein. Here are no vegetables, but such as grow spontaneously in the field. The root angelica is a favourite salad—they eat it generally with whale oil; a very important article in the Lapponian cookery. Their children learn early to suck this *liquid*; and if one may judge of what is best for health, by its effects upon the young Laplanders and Samoeids, the variety of glasses in our apothecaries' shops may be disused, their contents thrown out, and a few jars of whale and sea-dog essence put in their stead. The Laplanders boil and roast many vegetable roots, as well as eat them raw with salt or oil. The tender bark of the birch tree is their celery, and they eat it greedily after having dipped it in the whale sauce. In short, whale oil is a sauce they use to all kinds of viands, and eatables of every denomination.

The Russians are not behind hand in the
love

love of oil, though the oil is of more delicate quality. A Russian dips his bread, his fish, his vegetables, his pork-chops, and even caviar (the fattest and most luscious dish in the world) in oil. I believe this quantity of blubber, which the common Russians are perpetually sipping, serves to correct and to prevent the bad effects of the equal quantity of spirituous liquors poured upon their vitals. The oil serves as a coat of mail to the stomach of a Russian, as it naturally repels other liquids. The Laplanders are not more hurt by using spirituous liquors, than by water procured by melting snow. Their copious draughts of oil no doubt alleviate the diseases produced by drinking snow water, or it is frequently a preventative of them.

The attempts to promote agriculture in Lapland have been not only fruitless, but very prejudicial to the natives. The extreme cold of this climate is unfavourable to the growth of trees. The natives, depending much upon timber for fuel, saw their woods burned by colonial farmers. The
produce

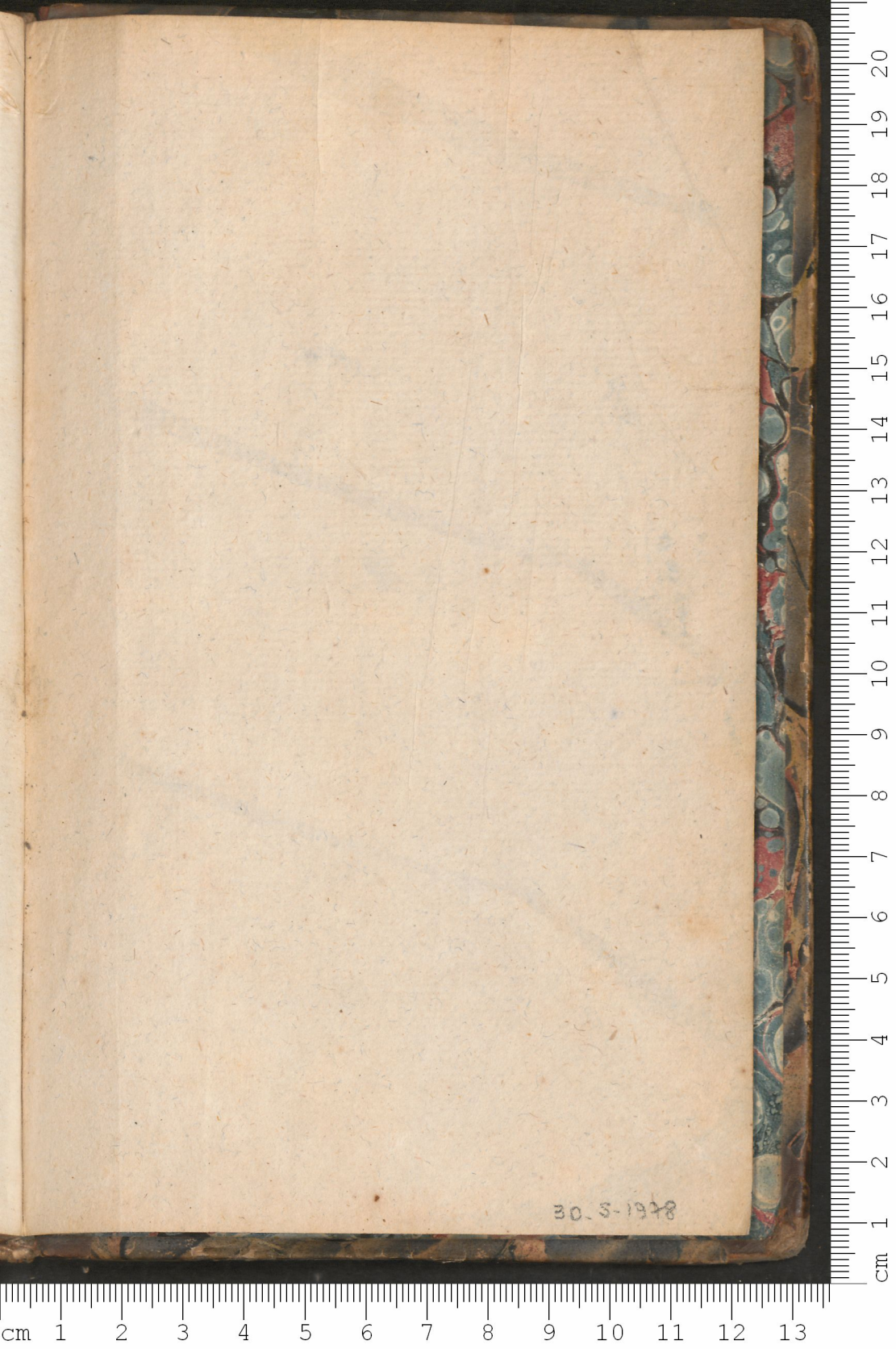
produce of the cleared grounds will never pay the damage, and the governments of Russia, Sweden, and Denmark should no longer persist in imaginary, while they might forward practicable, improvements. Let colonists be established in Lapland, Samoeida, and other northern provinces, for the purpose of teaching the inhabitants how to render their present situation more comfortable. For instance, let the colonists build commodious huts and villages of timber, as in Finland, with stoves and chimneys: let them be dressed after the manner of the Laplanders, which is best adapted for the climate, but let this dress be clean; let a shirt of linen be added, and ablutions in water frequently performed, as well as strict observance of cleanliness in every particular. The Laplanders would soon follow their example. Man is an imitative animal, and will pursue either virtue or vice, industry or profligacy, as it is held out to him by the example of others.

These are the simple improvements and lessons recommended for the natives of the
pole:

pole: their present situation renders them incapable, and it is to be feared that local circumstances always will render them incapable, of any other improvements.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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GENEVIÈVE



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